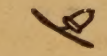
The HOLY SPIRIT

BY

THOS. H. WILSON

AUTHOR OF

From the Throttle to the Throne



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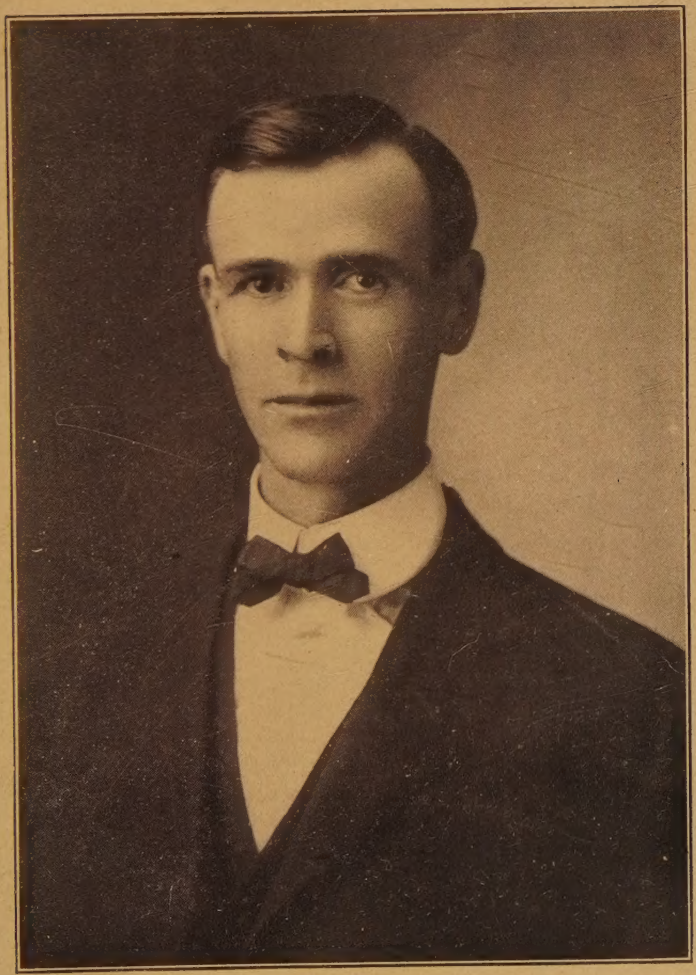

THOS. H. WILSON

DEDICATION.

To my Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph J. Wilson. who sympathize with me in my efforts to do good, this little volume is affectionately dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

We offer this little volume to the reading public in the hope and with a prayer that it may do good. While preparing this work, we labored to present the great truths of the subject on which it treats in plain, simple language and quoted from the Revised Version (American Standard Edition) of the Bible. A desire to reach a certain class of readers whom other writers have failed to reach and the earnest solicitation of a great many of our friends who have heard us lecture on some of the subjects discussed in this book, induced us to write this work. Our prayer is that this little book may be blessed to the end that it will be a useful weapon in the hands of the followers of Christ in extending His Kingdom on earth and that our Heavenly Father will save both its readers and its Author.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of the Holy Spirit and His mission to earth, is one upon which the religious world is greatly divided. The wrong interpretation of the Scriptures bearing upon this question, by those who would be teachers of the Word, has filled the church with confusion, caused divisions among the people of God, and made ship-wreck the faith of thousands of poor misguided souls who might have been among those who "stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," could some "Aquila and Priscilla," have led them out of their Spiritual darkness and taught them "the way of the Lord more perfectly." Were people who profess to be the children of God, to unite upon this subject—"all speak the same thing"—the walls of sectarianism would crumble away, and that blessed condition of unity and harmony among the followers of Christ, for which He so ardently prayed, would soon be realized.

This, like all religious questions, has its theor-

ists, who, with strong minds and able pens, are offering to earth's inquiring millions, a solution of its problems. Doubtless in America, where religious liberty is guaranteed to all, the minds of the people have been more active than in any other country. Some pride themselves in quoting that passage of Scripture in which Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."—John 14:12. Those who advocate divine healing claim that Jesus opened the blind eyes, unstopped the deaf ears, gave speech to the dumb, and raised the dead; and since He said "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also," they argue that they must be able to perform such miracles in order to be His disciples. Others deny the doctrine of divine healing and will stand for hours, making buildings and forests ring with the echoes of their eloquent voices as they summon all the power of their mental skill in trying to refute the claims of those who affirm that the disciples of our Lord have the gift of healing, the same now, as did those who lived during the Apostolic days. They affirm and reaffirm that the divine gifts of healing and prophecy belong only

to that age in which the Apostles lived. They turn their piercing eyes upon a sea of faces; they stamp their feet as if they were crushing the life out of some deadly foe; and, with one fierce gesture of their strong arm, as if to sweep away the very ghost of their opponents' slaughtered doctrine, turn and with all the boldness of a triumphant general, assert that there is not a man living on earth today, who can, by the divine gift, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, or life to the dead. But before the last word of their bold affirmation dies away upon the ears of their auditors, they will turn and lay down a proposition that forces them to affirm a greater miracle than that which they have denied; they tell the inquiring sinner that he is totally depraved, wholly incompetent to assist, in any way, in securing his own salvation from sin; they tell him that until the Holy Spirit—independent of the written or spoken word—enters his depraved heart, regenerates his soul, and opens his blind eyes that he may behold the Spiritual light, he can never extricate himself from the terrible depths of darkness into which the sin of his soul has plunged him. They will go further and tell him that the Holy Spirit comes like the wind, in a mysterious manner; often in answer

to the prayers of the saints, while at other times He comes without any human solicitation whatever. Still there are others, who, while bewildered and blinded by these conflicting theories, assert that the Holy Spirit and His mission are absolutely incomprehensible by the finite mind; and, in proof of their position, they quote a part of the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of First Timothy, where Paul says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." They wrest the Apostle's words out of their proper connection and put upon them a different meaning than that which he intended to convey. They claim that the mystery is the Holy Spirit and His work; and argue that if the Holy Spirit is a mystery without controversy, all discussion on the subject only tends to intensify man's inability to grasp its meaning and buries these precious hidden truths still deeper in the sea of profound and insolvable mystery.

We think it useless to stop here and offer our objections to the foregoing theories. We are confident that, under the plain teaching of the Son of God, the prayerful student can see the inconsistencies and unscripturalness of these false claims; and with the open Bible before him, learn of the "more excellent way," and the means by which

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God has promised to emancipate the soul from sin. However, we will state here that we do not believe the mission of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Surely, it would not be compatible with the wisdom and mercy of our heavenly Father to give us a law wrapped up in an incomprehensible mystery and punish us with eternal death if we fail to keep it. Isaiah says, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." If the pathway to heaven is so plain that the wayfaring men, though they be simpletons, shall not err therein, the office work of the Holy Spirit on earth can be no less so, as it is with our salvation that His mission has to do.

We are not vain enough to think that we can answer all of the questions bearing upon this subject, and thus accomplish something that stronger minds, abler pens, and more devoted hearts have failed to do; but we do think we can give a satisfactory answer, at least, to a few of the more practical ones with which our redemption from sin is concerned. Paul says, "But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes,"—ii Tim., 2:23, and Moses says, "The se-

cret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."—Deut., 29:29. It shall be our purpose to try to "avoid foolish and ignorant questionings," and thus heed the admonition of the great Apostle, but will call attention to a few of the blessed truths which are revealed.

For the sake of clearness, we will divide our subject into eight divisions, which are: 1st, The Holy Spirit; 2d, The Baptism of the Holy Spirit; 3d, Why Christians Cannot Perform Miracles; 4th, The Sin Against the Holy Spirit; 5th, The Operation of the Holy Spirit in the Conversion of the Sinner; 6th, The Birth of Water and the Spirit; 7th, The Reception of the Holy Spirit; and 8th, The Witness of the Spirit.

We will take up these divisions separately and discuss them in the order as stated, the first of which is, The Holy Spirit.

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Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.—John 16:7-11.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Bible teaches us that there is One God, Our Father; One Lord Jesus Christ,—Our Saviour; One Holy Spirit, Our Comforter. It also teaches us that the Holy Spirit is a person; and, as such, He is separate from the Father and Son but is one with them in nature, purpose. and work. Acting upon the presumption that no one will question our first affirmation, but believing the last two will need to be proved to satisfy the minds of some who may be among our readers, we will take them up in the order stated and offer the following proofs for their substantiation.

2d. Does the Bible teach that the Holy Spirit is a person and that, as such, He is separate from the Father and Son? We believe it does. It is true that when we attempt to understand all of the facts of the divine and ineffable relation of the Deity, we become lost in its sublimity and vastness. Such matters are far beyond the reach of our feeble

minds. They are, "the secret things," and belong not to us; and every effort upon our part to solve their incomprehensible mysteries is but an attempt to grow wise above that which is written. This, however, should not discourage us in trying to understand all God teaches upon the subject, but let us turn to "the law and the testimony," and learn those "things which are revealed."

That the Holy Spirit is a person is evident, we think, from the following reasons: (a) Jesus mentions the Holy Spirit as a person and, as such, refers to Him in the masculine gender. He says "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come."—John 16:13. (b) All of the essential parts of personality, together with many personal acts and attributes, not ascribable to any object, save a person, are attributed to him. He hears (John 16:13); He knows the things of God (i Cor., 2:10-11); He speaks (John 16:13); He prays (Rom., 8:26); He guided the Apostles into all truth (John 16:13); He reveals the things that God has prepared for those who love Him (i Cor., 2:10); He reproves of

sin (John 16:9); He strove with men (Gen., 6:3); He distributed gifts (i Cor., 12:11); He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30); He set bishops over churches (Acts 20:28); He forbad Paul preaching in Asia (Acts 16:6); and bears witness with the spirits of Christians (Rom., 8:16). (c) Men sustain relations toward Him such as are possible only toward a person. They grieve Him (Eph., 4:30); they resist Him (Acts 7:51); they sin against Him (Matt., 12:31); they invoke His communion (ii Cor., 13:14); they rebel against Him (Isa., 63:10); they are baptized into His name (Matt., 28:19); and they insult Him (Heb., 10:29.) (d) He is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (Matt., 3:16; Phil., 1:19).

The following proofs, we believe, will show clearly that, in person, the Holy Spirit is separate from the Father and Son: "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway from the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt., 3:16-17. From this account of the baptism of our Saviour we learn that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separate persons.

There in the river, with the baptismal waters dripping from His garments and the light and innocency of heaven stamped upon His sinless face, stood the blessed Son of God. In the air, descending like a dove to place upon the Lowly One the approval and seal of heaven, was the Spirit of God; while, farther on, the gates of heaven were opened and the voice of the Father was heard saying, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Here the three were manifested as three separate personalities. The Son on earth, the Holy Spirit in the air, and the Father in heaven. Jesus mentioned them separately when He gave the "every creature" commission to His Apostles. Hear His words, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matt., 28:19-20.

We are confident the foregoing Bible references are sufficient to prove that the Holy Spirit is a person and, as such, is separate from the Father and Son, but in order to satisfy the minds of those who would like to have the opinion of scholars on this subject, we will quote from the following men whose

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Bible knowledge has seldom, if ever, been questioned: "Spirit, Holy. The third person of the Trinity, whose office work it is to sanctify, or make holy, the people of God. The personality of the Holy Spirit is implied in the baptismal formula and the Apostolic benediction. As the Father and the Son are real persons, so must the Holy Spirit be also, thus joined with them in the solemn initiatory rite of the church."—Smith's Bible Dictionary, Article, "Holy Spirit." "God—the name of the Supreme Being, signifying in Hebrew, 'Strong,' 'Mighty.' It is expressive of that omnipotent power; and by its use here in the plural form, is obscurely taught at the opening of the Bible, a doctrine clearly revealed in other parts of it; viz., that though God is one, there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who were engaged in the creative w o r k."—Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary on Gen., 1:1. In "The Querists' Drawer," of the Christian Standard, (June 5th, 1909) appears the following question with its answer: "Do you understand John 15:26, and John 16:7, 8, 13, 14, as implying the Holy Spirit, and would this establish the Trinitarian view of the three persons in the Trinity?" Answer, "We take it that the Holy Spirit is referred to in the passages

indicated, but we do not understand that they establish the Trinitarian notion of the three persons in one God who is himself a unit. The idea is absurd and self-contradictory. The Scriptures clearly teach that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three separate and distinct persons. Christ, one person, was to pray to the Father, another person, and he was to send the Holy Spirit, a third person. The idea that it was the same person acting in three different capacities is absurd."

Believing the foregoing arguments sufficient to prove that the Holy Spirit is a person, and as such, He is separate from the Father and Son, we pass to our third proposition.

3d. Does the Bible teach us that the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and Son in nature, purpose, and work? We believe it does. In the Fifth Chapter and Seventh verse of First John, (King James' translation) we find this language, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one." It is true that this passage is supposed by some critics to be an interpolation; but this, if it be a fact, has never been successfully proved, and even if it were, it shows that our position was, at least, believed by early Christians. In

what sense, or how are these three one? Do we understand the Scriptures to teach that there are three persons in one God who is Himself a unit? No. Such a position would be at variance with every passage of Scripture bearing upon this subject. Do we understand the Holy Spirit to be the Spirit of God just in the sense we understand a man's spirit to be the spirit of man? We think not. God is Spirit and it is not easy to think of the spirit of a spirit. Such a position would force us to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is only a divine influence, and emanation, or manifestation of the divine, a mere impersonal force, instead of a thinking, speaking, and acting person, such as the Bible reveals Him to be. How then, we ask, are they one? Let us turn to the Bible which, to us, is the end of all controversy. In the petition to His Father, Jesus prayed that His disciples may be one as He and His Father are one. Hear His words, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one."—John

17:20-22. Note the expression, "that they may be one, even as we are one." From this we learn that God and Christ are one and that, in the sense in which they are one, Jesus prayed that His disciples should be one in them and one with each other. Some one may object here by saying that Jesus did not include the Holy Spirit as being one with His Father and Himself. That is true, but the passage from First John 5:7, which has already been quoted and commented upon, says the three—Father, Word, and Holy Spirit—bear record in heaven and that they are one. This includes the Holy Spirit. How are they one? They are one just in the sense Jesus prayed for His disciples to be one. Not one in person; but one in mind, one in purpose, and one in work.

One may ask, "if the Holy Spirit is a person, separate from the Father and Son, but one with them in mind, purpose, and work, why was He not referred to in the Old Testament as such?" It is true that, in the Old Testament, neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit was clearly revealed as a person, separate from the Father and each other. Then it was God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, while in the New Testament the order is, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The fact that Jesus was not

known in the Old Testament as a person separate from the Father and the Holy Spirit is no evidence that He did not exist as such. He has always been with the Father. Truly did the prophet speak when he said, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."—Micah 5:2. We can understand this subject much better if we will remember just here that the phrase, "Word of God," denotes an eternal relation, while the phrase, "Son of God," denotes a temporal relation. As the "Word of God," Jesus was, at least, as far as the divine Record informs us, co-eternal with the Father. (In the beginning was the Word) but He became the "Son of God," when He "became flesh," or was born of the virgin Mary (wherefore the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God."—Luke 1:35.) The Holy Spirit, like Christ, is not mentioned in the Old Testament as a person, but has always existed as such and was co-ordinate with the Father and Word in the work of creation, for it was He who "moved upon the face of the waters;" (Gen., 1:2), and it was by Him that God "garnished the heavens." (Job 26:13.) The Holy Spirit, like Christ, was not

known in ancient times as He is known now. Then He was known as the "Spirit of God," but now He is known as the "Holy Spirit." Back in the morning of time He brooded over the water and brought the light of heaven to penetrate the abysmal depths of the chaotic darkness and in the days of Noah He strove with men. J. W. McGarvey was asked the following question: "When, according to the Scriptures, did the work and mission of the Holy Spirit in leading men to obedience begin?" "I answer," he says, "that His present work of leading men to obey Christ, began on the next Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. His former work began before the flood (Gen., 6:3)." Christian Standard, June 13th, 1908. The Holy Spirit was present in the creation (Job 26:13); He testified against the wicked (Neh., 9:28-30); He inspired the prophets (ii Peter 1:20-21); He guided the Apostles (John 16:13); He bears witness with the spirits of Christians (Rom., 8:16); and dwells in the hearts of the people of God (i Cor., 3:16).

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.—Mark 1:7-8.

CHAPTER II.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

In studying the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the reader must bear in mind that, since the beginning of time, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, have each, during a certain period of years, reigned personally (known as persons) upon the earth. These periods we shall, for the sake of clearness and convenience, designate as 1st. The dispensation of the Father; 2d, The dispensation of the Son; and 3d, The dispensation of the Holy Spirit. We would not leave the impression, neither do we believe, that any one of the three either worked alone or independent of the other two in any one of these dispensations. But, on the other hand, we believe the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit have been co-workers with each other, both in creation and redemption. During the first dispensation, the Son and the Holy Spirit worked through the Father; during the second, the Father and Holy Spirit worked through the Son; and during the third, the

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Father and Son work through the Holy Spirit. The first dispensation lasted from the creation of Adam until the introduction of Christ to the world at His baptism. During this period, man knew no divine person except the Father. He alone was his King, Law-giver, and Object of his worship. Hence, our reason for calling this, the first four thousand years of the world's history, the dispensation of the Father. The second dispensation lasted from the introduction of Christ to the world at His baptism until the descent of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost following His resurrection. With the beginning of this short period, Jesus entered upon His ministry with "power on earth to forgive sins." This is known as Christ's personal ministry, or the dispensation of the Son. The third and last period commenced with the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and continues to the present and will continue until that day when the Angel shall announce that time shall be no more. At the beginning of this, the third period, the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles, guided them into all truth, made known to them the mystery of Christ and, through His appointed medium, is now "reproving the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Hence, our reason for calling this the dispensation

of the Holy Spirit. At the close of the first dispensation, God introduced Christ to the world by saying, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." With this introduction, Jesus entered upon and continued His personal ministry for about three and one-half years, during which time He promised His disciples another Comforter—the Holy Spirit—"and, being assembled together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence."—Acts 1:4-5. This brings us to our present theme—"The Baptism of the Holy Spirit." In order that we may make this subject plain and easily understood, we shall ask and try to give Bible answers to the following questions:

1st, By whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered? 2d, To whom was it administered? 3d, What were its effects upon those who received it? 4th, For what purpose was it administered?

1st, By whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered?

This question need not consume much of our

time. John the Baptist said to them who came to him demanding baptism in Jordan, "There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit."—Mark 1:7-8. From this we learn that Jesus was to administer the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as He was the "Mightier One" referred to by John.

2d, To whom was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered?

That God did, through John the Baptist and Christ, promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit to certain persons, all Bible readers are agreed, but as to whom or how many were to be the recipients of this baptism, they are greatly divided. Some believe it to be general and perpetual and thus to be enjoyed by all Christians of every age, while others believe it was to be special and limited to the day of miracles, or the first century of the Christian era. Those who claim that Christians receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit now, think they can see in the Holy Scriptures sufficient proof to establish their claim. We will now examine some of the passages referred to by them that we may be able to ascertain just what the Bible does teach on this subject.

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The first passage to which we call attention is found in Joel 2:28-30, and reads as follows: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." That this prophecy refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit is claimed by those who advocate the doctrine of present day Holy Spirit baptism, to be evident from the expression, "pour out of my Spirit," and that it is to be general and perpetual is obvious, they say, from the phrase, "upon all flesh." Their argument is that the Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh; the Christians of the present day constitute a part of "all flesh;" therefore, it follows that all Christians who have lived since that promise was fulfiled have, and those who will yet accept Christ, will receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That this prophecy does refer to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we believe to be true, but that it teaches that all Christians of every age are to receive it, we are not prepared to admit. We believe the expression,

"all flesh," is to be limited, otherwise it will prove entirely too much, even for those who rely upon it as a proof text to establish their claim. Paul says, "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes."—i Cor., 15:39. If the phrase, "upon all flesh" is not to be limited, it would prove that the beasts of the fields, fowls of the air, and the fishes of the seas are to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit also. One may object to this by saying, "all flesh," means all human flesh. Admitting that "all flesh" does not include the flesh of fish, birds, and beasts, but simply all human flesh, still it proves too much. It would include the wicked as well as the righteous and, as it is claimed by those who advocate this theory that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is in order to salvation, it would follow that everybody will be saved; notwithstanding Jesus says, "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby." Let him who advocates this theory, not only affirm that the cold blooded murderer, who, after painting his hands red with the blood of his innocent and defenseless victim and goes to the scaffold cursing the God who created him, is saved by the

baptism of the Holy Spirit; but let him whet up his theological sword and champion the cause of Universalism, a doctrine which is nowhere taught in God's Word. But says another, "It means all Christians." We see from this reasoning that even those who advocate the doctrine of present day Holy Spirit baptism, must admit that the expression, "all flesh," must be limited to a very small portion of earth's countless millions. If we are warranted in placing the above restrictions, or limitations upon the declaration, "upon all flesh," why not make others which will be more consistent and harmonious with Bible teaching? From this prophecy we learn that the sons and daughters of those who were to receive this baptism were to prophesy, their old men were to dream dreams, and their young men were to see visions. Are these prophecies, dreams, and visions to be seen among Christians today? If not, the expression, "all flesh" must be pruned down to a certain age and people when such phenomena were seen.

When, we ask, was this prophecy fulfilled? The language of John the Baptist now claims our attention. He said to those who came to him to be baptized in Jordan, "I baptize you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit."—Mark 1:8.

From this we learn that the long looked for and promised Spirit baptism was still in the future in John's day. Let us follow on and see if we can locate the time and place of this baptism and the people who were to receive it. Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told His disciples "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence."—Acts 1:4-5. At this time Jesus ascended to His Father and His disciples, after watching their beloved teacher and companion as He went from their sight into the cloud of heaven, turned and went to Jerusalem to wait for the power which was to be given them by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Luke tells us what occurred ten days after their arrival in Jerusalem. He says, "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues,

as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born?" —Acts 2:1-8. "And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams: Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they

shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, And signs on earth beneath; Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke."—Verses 13-19. The reader will notice here that ten days before Pentecost, Jesus referred to the phenomena which was to take place on that day, and called it the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and Peter, while inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared the same to be the fulfilling of Joel's prophecy. Hence, it follows that the promise to which Jesus referred and called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and which Peter emphatically declared was Joel's prophecy, was fulfilled on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ and that the Apostles of our Lord were the only recipients.

Some one will ask, "Were the Apostles the only persons who ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?" No. There is one more case of the Spirit baptism recorded in the New Testament. It is that of Cornelius and his house and is mentioned in the tenth chapter of Acts. To quote Peter's language in his defense before his Jewish brethren in Jerusalem, will serve our purpose here, but we will discuss this case more fully under the heading, "For what purpose was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered?" Peter, in justifying himself for

preaching to Cornelius, a Gentile, said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?"—Acts 11:15-17. The fact that Peter quoted the words of Christ, when He referred to the Apostles receiving this baptism, as being also applicable to the Gentiles, is sufficiently clear to prove that Cornelius and his house received the Holy Spirit baptism also. From the foregoing Scriptures we learn that there are two cases of the baptism of the Holy Spirit recorded in the New Testament, one of which took place in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost where the Apostles alone were its recipients, and the other occurred at Cesarea where Cornelius and his house received it.

3d, What were the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon those who received it?

Like causes and environments always produce like effects. If those who claim to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit now, would do what the Apostles did—speak with other tongues, heal the

sick, raise the dead, and thus show their faith by their works—they would convert the world to their manner of thinking much sooner than they can by their vain and fruitless assertions. From the Second chapter of Acts we may learn what some of the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit were upon those who reecived it. Luke says, "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born?" The reader will note here that one of the peculiar and strange effects of the baptism of the

Holy Spirit was to enable the Apostles, while speaking in their own language, to be heard and understood in about seventeen dialects. To illustrate, suppose a Jew were to go before an audience in which were representatives of a number of languages, not one of whom could understand the others, or even a word in any language except his own. The Jew begins to speak in his own language, the German understands in the German language, the Frenchman in the French language, the Englishman in the English language, the Italian in the Latin language, the Greek in the Greek language, etc. Such were the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. We frequently see people who claim to have the power to speak with "unknown" or "other" tongues. They will go before an audience and gabber for an hour or more at a time. They themselves don't understand what they are saying, nor neither do those who hear them. They claim to be of the "Apostolic order," but they are far from it. The difference between them and the Apostles can be summed up thusly: "They speak in tongues which no one can understand, while the Apostles spoke in tongues which everybody could understand."

When Cornelius and his house received the bap-

tism of the Holy Spirit, they spoke with tongues and magnified God. The Apostles could speak with other tongues, cast out devils, heal the sick, open the blind eyes, unstop the deaf ears, and raise the dead (physical body). The fruit test is the only test. Therefore, when those who claim to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, can perform miracles like the Apostles did, and thus prove their faith by their works, we are ready to hear them, but until they can do these things, their claims are not worthy of any further consideration.

4th, For what purpose was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered?

As we enter into the discussion of this subject we are confronted with a number of erroneous theories which have been offered to the world as a solution of this question. Many of these theories, which, a few years ago, were proclaimed from every pulpit in the land and sparkled like so many diamonds in the minds of some of the greatest and most brilliant theologians of the past, are now practically exploded and their lifeless bodies are quietly reposing in their creed-like sepulchres, and are preserved as relics of our grandfathers, rather than for the use of our children. There are, however, a few of these theories which have escaped the

fate of the others, and like so many refugees from some devastated army have, under the guise of Bible truths, passed the Scriptural picket lines, entered into the minds of some of the religious teachers of our day and through them are still demanding a consideration from a penitent world. One of these theories teaches that man is totally depraved, wholly averse to all good; and that, until this depravity is removed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he can never become a child of God. If this doctrine be true, it follows that the Apostles were. for more than three and a half years after they became disciples of Christ, totally depraved and wholly averse to all good, as they were not baptized in the Holy Spirit until the first Pentecost following Christ's resurrection. This, we are quite sure, no one is prepared to prove. Let us notice the character of Cornelius before he was baptized with the Holy Spirit and see if this theory will fit his case. Luke says he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."—Acts 10:2. Surely, a man who was totally depraved and wholly averse to all good, could not have led a devout life. given alms to the people, and prayed to God always. But says another, the baptism of the Holy

Spirit is in order to produce faith. This could not have been true with the Apostles because they had implicit faith in Christ when they went to Jerusalem to wait for the promised Spirit baptism. It was not God's will that the Gentiles should obtain faith by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for Peter says, "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."—Acts 15:7. Paul says, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."—Rom., 10:17. A third theory teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is in order to the remission of sins. If this position be true, it follows that the Apostles were for more than three years without the pardon of their sins after they became followers of Christ. Surely, the advocates of this theory can produce no grounds on which to find fault with the doctrine of six months probation. This theory will not apply in Cornelius' case, for Peter was to tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved. (Acts 11:14.) The Apostles evidently did not believe this theory, seeing they commanded believers to repent and be baptized unto the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38.)

For what purpose then, was the baptism of the

Holy Spirit administered? We have already learned that there are but two cases of the baptism of the Holy Spirit recorded in the New Testament. The first is that of the Apostles at Jerusalem, and the second is that of Cornelius and his house at Cesarea. We will take up these cases separately that we may see the purpose for which each was given.

(1) For what purpose was the baptism of the Holy Spirit given to the Apostles? Just a short time before Jesus was put to death, He said to them, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for

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he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you."—John 16:7-15. This Scripture teaches us that, although Jesus had been teaching His Apostles the great truths of His coming Kingdom, there were some things which they were not prepared to understand and that it would require another Comforter or teacher to remind them of the things which He had told them and to apprise them of those things which they, at the time Jesus was with them, could not bear. When Christ died on the cross He abrogated the Law of Moses, (ii Cor., 3:7-14; Col., 2:14-15) thus leaving the people of God without a written law. After He rose from the dead, He came to His Apostles and said, "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matt., 28:18-20. How could the Apostles of our Lord go and teach all nations when the Law of Moses, under which they had lived all their lives, was abolished and not a word

of the New Testament had been written? How could they go and teach in all of the languages of the earth, when they knew none except their own and were unlearned even in it? If we will follow them from that place ever made sacred to them by the ascension of their Lord and Master, to that upper room and remain with them until the promised Spirit baptism comes, listen to them as they preach to that great multitude, facts both new and old, and learn the wonderful secret of that great power by which, in a moment's time, they became so proficient in all the languages of the world, we will have no trouble in seeing the purpose for which they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In order to carry out the great commission given to them by our Lord, the Apostles had to be endowed with a knowledge and invested with a power such as no human being had ever possessed. Though not a word of the New Testament had been written, yet they had to be able to teach that the Law which was given to Moses on the summit of a trembling Sinai, and which, for fourteen hundred years, had been the only and supreme law in Israel, was abolished; and that Jesus had appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It was necessary that they be able to under-

stand and speak all of the languages of the world. It was important that they remember everything that Jesus had told them during the three and a half years He was with them on earth, and that other great and important truths should be revealed to them. It was necessary that they be able to confirm the truths which they taught by performing miracles. and that they leave a written guide for the instruction and comfort of the saints of all ages. On the day of Pentecost this knowledge and power came to them through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, revealed to them the symbolical significance of the rent in the veil—the passing away of the Mosaic Law—brought to their remembrance all things that Jesus had told them, enabled them to speak with other tongues and thus thoroughly qualified them in every way to carry out the great Commission as "they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed;" and. before the sting of their bitter persecution and the cold of the dark damp prison palsied their hands, or the headman's axe silenced their tongues, they left a written record—the New Testament—which "is also profitable for teaching, for reproof. for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that

the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

(2) For what purpose was Cornelius and his house baptized with the Holy Spirit? The reader, doubtless, has noticed from the reading of the Scriptures that the gospel was not preached to any people except the Jews, either on Pentecost, or for more than eight years afterward. Notwithstanding Jesus had said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd," and that the Apostles had, since Pentecost, been laboring under a commission which, when its terms of pardon are accepted, makes every creature of earth an heir to heaven; yet, they did not understand that it embraced any save those who were of the seed of Abraham. The Apostles had been schooled under the Law of Moses. This Law, for more than fourteen hundred years, had been held sacred by their Fathers. By it they governed the family, city, and nation. To induce them to give up this Law and accept one in its stead, which, in many vital points, contradicted the teaching of Moses, required some divine interference. This, as has already been shown, was accomplished when the Apostles received the

baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. But there was another great change to take place in their social and ecclesiastical lives. They had looked upon the Gentiles as an unclean, unworthy, and a foreign people, and as having no part or blessing in any law emanating from God. Notwithstanding they had been living under the Abrahamic promise which was to bless all nations and had, since Pentecost, been working under a law which offered salvation to "every creature," yet they place upon the world-wide Commission, the same narrow limits which always characterized the Mosaic Law and were perfectly blind to any clause in the Law of Christ that would bless a Gentile. So biased and unprepared were they for the reception of the Gentiles into the Church that, in the wisdom of God, it was postponed for more than eight years after Pentecost. But the time had now come when the Gentiles were to be admitted into the fold of Christ. Peter held the keys of the Kingdom and he must be induced to open its Spiritual door and receive the Gentiles into the Church of Christ and into full fellowship with the Jews. This, like the other change, was so radical and so foreign to their former teaching that it required the baptizing of a Gentile with the Holy Spirit, that the Jews may understand that

"to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." Hence, it is easy to see that there were two great epochs connected with the proclamation of the gospel to the world. The first we shall call the Jewish epoch and the second, that of the Gentiles. The first epoch dates from Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the gospel was preached to the Jews, while the second dates from Cesarea when, for the first time, God granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles. As the beginning of the first epoch was attended by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so must the second be also; and, as Peter, to whom Jesus had given the keys of the Kingdom, unlocked the Spiritual institution and admitted the Jews into the one body, so he was the proper and only qualified person to open wider its doors of grace and receive the Gentiles into "the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ." When the fullness of the time had come and God, in His infinite wisdom, saw fit to bring the Gentiles into His Kingdom, there were four things necessary to its accomplishment. First, there had to be a Gentile subject. For this, God selected Cornelius "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."—Acts 10:2. Second, Cornelius had

to be instructed to send for Peter that he might learn what he ought to do. God did this by sending an angel to speak directly to him. (Acts 10:3-6.) Third, Peter must be satisfied within his own mind that the Gentiles were not common or unclean, and that he must go with the men whom Cornelius had sent, "doubting nothing." God did this by a vision and a voice from heaven. (Acts 10:9-20.) Fourth, Peter had to be convinced that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him," and that he must teach and baptize the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This was accomplished by Cornelius relating the story of the Angel's visit and God baptizing him (Cornelius) and his house with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:28-48.)

From the foregoing we learn that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit when given to the Apostles, was to thoroughly qualify them to go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature and confirm their words with signs following; and, when it was given to Cornelius and his house it was that Peter and his Jewish brethren might know that the Gentiles were no longer unclean, but that they could do God's "commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

WHY CHRISTIANS CANNOT PERFORM MIRACLES

THE HOLY SPIRIT

And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.—Mark 16:17-18.

CHAPTER III.

WHY CHRISTIANS CAN NOT PERFORM MIRACLES.

The question of working miracles in this age has caused a great deal of useless comment and harmful discussion among the children of God. These debates, instead of uniting the followers of Christ and crowning Him King of every heart, have resulted in dividing His people and greatly hindering the growth of His Kingdom on earth. There are a great many theories touching upon this question, each one of which has its champion who has robed himself in his pugilistic armor, walked out in the arena of oral war-fare and, since the day in which the immortal Luther broke the Papal yoke and placed an open Bible in almost every home, the roar of the theological cannons has echoed through the Church of the living God. And, judging from the noise of battle, the conflict is not ended. Division —the enemy to God and all righteousness—is neither dead nor wounded. Not one of his generals

has met his Waterloo, no Wellington has appeared on the field, nor has any David presented to the "Prince of Peace," the severed head of this annoying Goliath.

To some who have never "come to a knowledge of the truth," the lack of miracles among Christians of this age, is a matter of no little concern. They wonder if, among the multiplied millions of Christ's followers, there is not one who has the faith of a mustard seed. They read in the New Testament where the Apostles and other Christians of the first century cast out devils, spoke with other tongues, and healed the sick; and where Jesus said such signs and miracles should follow them that believe. They wonder why it is that when the Christian touches the blind eyes, they remain closed, or when the believer drinks poison, he succumbs to its deadly effects. They argue that the Christians who live in this age should either perform miracles or give a Bible reason why they can not. Their claim is a just one and therefore it behooves every professed follower of Christ to either confirm his faith by some miraculous demonstration, or be able to give a Scriptural reason "why Christians can not perform miracles." There are some professed Christians who claim they can work miracles. We will

not take the readers' time just here to discuss their false assumptions, farther than to say, that, if believers in this and every other age since the Apostles' day could perform miracles, this question would have long ago been taken off of the debatable list. Theirs, if true, is the easiest of all propositions proved. Instead of loud assertions and forced Scriptural interpretations, if the advocates of this theory will, like Christ and the Apostles, come out in the open, speak intelligently in languages which they have never studied, toy with venomous serpents, drink deadly poison, and cure the sick instantly, intelligent men and women will no longer doubt their claim. In order to ascertain the reason why Christians can not perform miracles, it will be necessary to call attention to several Scriptures treating on this subject, the first of which reads as follows: "And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall accompany

them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."—Mark 16:14-18.

As a result of the wrong interpretations put upon it by some Bible readers, this Scripture seems to be the ground over which so many fierce battles have been fought, as well as that hidden rock upon which so many poorly manned vessels—souls—have been driven by the waves of doubt and swallowed up in the sea of despair and unbelief. The infidel fortifies himself behind this Scripture and when he sees a soldier of the cross who is spending more of his time in making "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," than he is in laying up "treasures in heaven," or, a new recruit who has just donned the Christian armor but yet unskilled in wielding the "Sword of the Spirit," he turns "a broad side" loose on him by asking if he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? He is answered in the affirmative. The infidel will then ask if he can perform the miracles which Jesus said should follow them that believe? He answers in the negative. The infidel will then

use the following arguments: "Jesus said that those who believe on Him should perform miracles; you can't perform miracles; therefore, you don't believe." Or, "If the Bible is true; all who believe can perform miracles; you believe, but can't perform miracles; therefore, the Bible is not true." While the logician might be able to show the weakness and successfully combat these syllogistic deductions, but to him who is unacquainted with this manner of reasoning, they will come with all the force of real and unanswerable arguments. These and other like blows from the trained minds of skilled infidels are liable to shatter, if not completely overthrow the faith of the babe in Christ. For this and other reasons, every child of God should make the Bible his daily companion that he might be able at all times to give "a reason concerning the hope that is" within him.

When Jesus said, "these signs shall accompany them that believe," did He mean to teach that this miracle working power was to be special and limited to a few of His followers of the first century, or that it was to be general and perpetuated throughout the Christian age? To ascertain just what our blessed Master meant by this language, let us ask and, if possible, give Scriptural answers to the following questions:

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1st, To whom was the special and divine power by which miracles were performed, given? 2d, For what purpose was it given? 3d, When did it cease? 4th, Why did it cease?

1st, To whom was the special and divine power by which miracles were performed, given?

One may say that this question was answered more than eighteen hundred years ago by the Saviour Himself; and, according to His own words, this power was given to "them that believe;" therefore, it should be enjoyed by all Christians. Is this position true? Did Jesus teach that "these signs" should follow all believers of the first and all succeeding centuries of the Christian era? We think not. There is a rule in grammar which says, "A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender." By applying this rule to our Savious's language we will be able to see just whom He meant that these signs were to follow. The first verse of the Scripture in question reads as follows: "And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen." In this verse Jesus censures His disciples for not believing those who had

seen Him since He had risen from the dead. This sharp rebuke is the key which must unlock and open to our understanding the seventeenth and eighteenth verses. The reader will note that, beginning with the fourteenth verse, there is a succession of plural pronouns running through all of the remaining verses of the chapter, except the sixteenth, the antecedent of which is, "eleven," mentioned in the fourteenth verse. The sixteenth verse is a parenthetical insertion and has no grammatical connection with any part of the chapter, as is clearly indicated by the singular noun "creature" and pronoun "he." The "creature" and "he" mentioned in the sixteenth verse, represent the general believer and are not to be contemplated as being among those commissioned to preach the gospel and perform miracles, but rather among those to whom the Apostles were to preach and for whose benefit these miracles were to be performed. After having thrown in the sixteenth verse as a parenthetical expression, having general application to every believer, the Lord takes up the thread of His special discourse to His Apostles, indicated in the fourteenth verse as the "eleven" saying, "And these signs shall accompany them that believe." To locate those who were to be the recipients of this

special power to perform miracles, let us look for the antecedent of the pronoun "them," remembering that, like its pronoun, it must be in the third person, plural number, and common gender. We go back over the chapter until we come to the sixteenth verse. Here we find the noun "creature," having reference to the believer in general, but it can not be the antecedent of the pronoun "them." because "creature" is singular, while "them" is plural. We go on until we come to the fourteenth verse where we find the noun "eleven," referring to the Apostles, and as there is no other plural noun between it and the pronoun "them" in the seventeenth verse, it follows as a grammatical deduction that "these signs" were to follow the Apostles and not the "every creature" whom the Apostles were to teach and baptize. This argument is strengthened by the last verse of the chapter which says, "and they (the Apostles) went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." Some people, doubtless, will object to this argument. They may claim that those who lived at the time Christ was on earth knew but little and were less observant of the rules governing the use of language, than are the people of this age. This objection is,

within itself, sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that those who offer it are incompetent to criticise the grammatical and rhetorical ability of the writers and speakers of the first century. "But," says one, "suppose we do admit that the grammatical position is correct and that it proves that the signs mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Mark were to follow the Apostles only, it does not justify the conclusion that, because none of the Apostles are now living, miracles have necessarily ceased, for the Bible teaches that persons who were not Apostles, performed miracles." While the signs mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Mark, were to follow the Apostles only, it is an undisputable fact that, since the beginning of the Spiritual reign on Pentecost, persons, other than those commissioned as Apostles, did perform miracles, but they, with one exception, (Cornelius and his house) did not receive this power directly from the Lord as did the Apostles, but by the "laying on of the Apostles' hands."—(Acts 6:6; 8:17.)

The New Testament plainly teaches that, since the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, the special and divine power by which miracles were performed, was given to three classes of believers. (a) It was given to the Apostles. They

could cast out devils, (Acts 5:16); speak with other tongues, (Acts 2:4); heal the sick, (Acts 9:33-34); handle serpents, (Acts 28:1-5); and raise the dead, (Acts 9:40; 20:9-10). (b) It was given to Cornelius and his house. This was a special case and has been discussed at some length in another part of this work. (c) It was given to those upon whom the Apostles laid their hands. To prove this assertion, we quote the following language: "And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the Apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Step-

hen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people."—Acts 6:2-8. The reader will note that, from Pentecost to the ordination of the seven, no one is referred to as having worked miracles except the Apostles; and that, immediately following this ordination, "Stephen full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people," and Philip went to Samaria, preached the gospel and worked miracles, but it was after the Apostles had "laid their hands on them."

That all who performed miracles, except the Apostles and Cornelius and his house, received this miracle working power "through laying on of the Apostles hands", and not directly from the Lord, may be further proved by the following Scriptures: "Now when the Apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apos-

tles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying. Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit."—Acts 8:14-19. Again, "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said. Into what then were you baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."—Acts 19:1-6. Paul said to Timothy, "For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands."—ii Tim.. 1:6. Again, he wrote to the brethren at Rome saying, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be establish-

ed."—Rom., 1:11. Had this miracle working power been given to the early Christians directly from the Lord, or in any other way, except through the imposition of Apostolic hands, it would not have been necessary for Paul to have seen the disciples at Rome in order to impart to them "some spiritual gift."

While the Apostles had the power to impart miracles to others, those to whom they gave the power, could not impart it to any one else. Or, in other words, the Apostles' power was two fold. They had a miracle working power, which they could impart to others; and, they had a miracle imparting power, which was peculiar to the Apostolic office and was not transferable. Therefore, common reason will teach us that miracles were not to be general and perpetuated throughout the Christian era, but special and limited to the Apostles and those upon whom they laid their hands. Hence, after the death of the Apostles, this power was no longer imparted to others; and, after the death of those to whom the Apostles imparted it, miracles necessarily ceased. One may say, "Your arguments are conclusive, provided the New Testament teaches that no person, except an Apostle, could impart the power to work miracles to others." That the New

Testament does so teach, we believe is evident from the following Scripture: "Now when the Apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part not lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God."—Acts 8:14-21. Surely, if any one, except an Apostle, could have conferred this miracle working power upon others, Philip could, as he was a man of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom. But the very fact that he did not is strong, if not conclusive evidence that he could not. If, however, he could have conferred this gift, the mission of the Apostles was useless, as

the chief purpose for which they went from Jerusalem to Samaria, was to lay their hands on the newly made disciples and pray "that they might receive the Holy Spirit." Why was it necessary for the Apostles to go to Samaria, if Philip could have imparted this gift? Again. "when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given," he wanted to buy the gift to impart this power to others and, in so doing, committed a grievous sin, but Peter said to him, "thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God." Why did he have neither part nor lot in this matter? Was it because he had never been a Christian? No. Luke says he believed and was baptized, and Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." —Mark 16:16. Was the reason he had neither part nor lot in imparting the Holy Spirit, because he had sinned and his heart was not (at that time) right before God? His miserable and wretched condition of mind would, no doubt, have disqualified even an Apostle, but the answer, "thou has neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God," is not to be limited to the reason given, for if his heart had been right, still he would have had no part in the matter, because the Holy

Spirit was given "through laying on of the Apostles' hands," and he was not an Apostle. The facts surrounding this and the other cases recorded in the sixth and nineteenth chapters of Acts, warrant the conclusion that the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit was bestowed through no human hands but those of the Apostles'.

We conclude this division of our subject by stating that the special and divine power by which miracles were performed, was given to the Apostles, Cornelius and his house, and those upon whom the Apostles laid their hands.

2d, For what purpose was the special and divine power by which miracles were performed, given?

The failure on the part of some Bible readers to understand just to whom this power was given, is largely responsible for the different views among God's people, as to the purpose for which it was given. Some may claim that it was given to remit sins. This can't be true, for Peter tells us that, when preceded by faith, repentance and baptism are for the remission of sins, (Acts 2:38.) What then, was the purpose for which this power was given? By a careful perusal of the Old and New Testaments, the reader will see that God had a two

fold purpose in endowing certain persons with this miraculous power during the centuries in which He was preparing the world for the reception of His Spiritual Kingdom. In both instances, however, its work was to be temporary. (a) This power was given in order to attrat the attention and convince the unbelievers that the words spoken by inspired teachers were true. (b) It was given to the Apostles and those upon whom they conferred it, to enable them to remember and teach the truths of the gospel and, in many other ways, to take the place of the New Testament until it was committed to writing near the close of the first century, at which time, as we shall see later, prophecies, tongues, and miraculous knowledge gave place to the written word. We will take up these assertions in the order stated and see whether or not the Bible will bear us out in them.

(a) Was this power given to attract the attention and convince the unbelievers that the words spoken by the inspired teachers were true? We believe the following Scriptures will prove the correctness of this position: Paul says, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving."—i Cor., 14:22. There are many examples in both the Old and New Testaments

where God, through His servants, employed miraculous means, in connection with spoken words, to shatter the doubts and produce faith in the hearts of unbelievers. The hard hearted and tyrannical Pharaoh, when entreated by Moses and Aaron to let the children of Israel go and sacrifice to the Lord, said, "who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go."—Ex., 5:2. But when he saw the wonderful manifestation of the divine power exhibited by Aaron as he converted his rod into a serpent, and by its magical touch, turned the waters into blood, and brought the loathsome insects from the dust, his stubborn will was broken and, pleading with the servants of God to entreat for him, said, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to Jehovah your God in the wilderness."—Ex., 8:28. When Elijah raised the widow's son from the dead, she said, "now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is true."—i King 17:24. Again, when the unbelieving prohpets of Baal heard Elijah calling upon God saying, "Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God," and saw the fire fall from heaven, lick up the waters and consume even the stones of the al-

tar, they fell on their faces and said, "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."—i Kings 18:37-39. Many more like examples could be referred to in the Old Testament, but these are sufficient to prove that God employed miraculous means under the Patriarchal and Levitical priesthoods to convince unbelievers that the words spoken by His servants were true. By turning to the New Testament we find that the purpose for which miracles were performed during the first century of the Christian era, was the same as that under the Old Testament. When Jesus entered upon His personal ministry, He declared Himself to be the only begotten Son of God, and said, "no one cometh unto the Father but by me."—(John 3:16; 14:6.) All of the people were not ready to believe Him and some, like Philip, said, "show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," while others said, "what then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou?" —(John 14:8; 6:30.) Jesus, in order to be the Saviour of the world, had to first convince the people that He was the Christ, the Son of God. This He did by His miracles, which the following Scriptures will abundantly prove: At the marriage in Cana, He turned water into wine, and "manifested His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."—John

2:11. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did."—John 2:23. Again, when Lazarus was raised from the dead, "Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews, who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him."—John 11:41-45. John emphatically declares that the purpose for which Jesus performed miracles, was that the people might believe on Him. Hear his words, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."—John 20:30-31. Truly did Peter speak when he said, "ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you

by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know."—Acts 2:22. When the people saw Jesus calm the seas, heal the sick, open blind eyes, and raise the dead, they believed He was the Christ and, like Nicodemus, said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."—John 3:2.

After the ascension of Christ, the Apostles began to preach the gospel and, like their blessed Master, employed miraculous gifts in connection with their words to convince the people that they were sent of God. On the day of Pentecost when the multitude saw and heard them speaking in other tongues, "they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold are not all of these that speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born?"—Acts 2:7-8. When Peter healed the lame man at the gate of the Temple, "all men glorified God for that which was done."—Acts 4:21. The raising of Tabitha from the dead "became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord."—Acts 9:42. Again, Paul smote Elymas with blindness "and the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being

astonished at the teaching of the Lord."—Acts 13:12. When the Apostles performed miracles, such as healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead, the people believed their teaching and, like the damsel, said, "These men are servants of The Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation."—Acts 16:17. Obedient to the command of Christ, the Apostles went every where preaching His gospel and the Lord, faithful to His promise, worked "with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed."—Mark 16:20.

(b) Was this miracle working power given to the Apostles and those upon whom they conferred it, to enable them to remember and teach the truths of the gospel and, in many other ways, to take the place of the New Testament until it was committed to writing near the close of the first century? We believe it was. As the New Testament was not written at the time the Apostles began their work on Pentecost, and as the Law of Moses—the only law they had ever learned—was abolished, it was necessary that they be endowed with power from on high that they might remember and teach the truths of the New Covenant. Jesus told them that, for this purpose, they would receive the Holy Spirit. Hear His words, "The Comforter, even the Holy

Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.''—John 14:26. After His resurrection He appeared unto them and said, ''But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'' —Acts 1:8. On the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ this promised power came ''and there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.''—Acts 2:3-4. The Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles to bring to their minds the things that Jesus had told them and to speak, through them, to the people. The words the Apostles uttered were not theirs, but those of the Spirit. Thus the promise, it shall not be ''ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit,'' was fulfilled in its most literal sense. Were these the only reasons why God gave the Apostles the Holy Spirit? No. The commission under which the Apostles were laboring was world wide in its scope. When they planted a church in a certain city, they could not remain long

with it, but had to depart to other fields of labor. But what became of the church after they left it? They had no written guide—the New Testament—to leave with it. Would they leave it without any means of increasing its knowledge of the Spiritual Institution, and with nothing but the fallible memories of its members to retain the truths of the gospel? No. To supply this want, as well as to leave with the church the means of convincing unbelievers, they chose from the congregation godly men and conferred upon them the gift to teach, work miracles, and feed the church of God. Paul gives us the order in which inspired men were set in the church. He says, "And God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."—i Cor., 12:28. It is well to note here that the Apostles did not confer the same kind of gifts upon all on whom they laid their hands, but there were "diversities of gifts." Paul says, "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and

to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues.''—i Cor., 12:8-10. The same Apostle tells us why these gifts were given to the members of the early church. He says, ''And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.''—Eph., 4:11-13. If we will remember that these miraculous manifestations—these beginnings—were necessary to the introduction of the gospel, but were to cease when that which is perfect—the New Testament—came, the difficulties surrounding miracles will immediately disappear.

3d, When did the special and divine power by which miracles were performed, cease?

Paul says, ''Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.''—i Cor., 12:1. What kind of gifts are we studying? Spiritual gifts, and the Apostle says that he would not have us ignorant in regard to them. He mentions wisdom, knowledge, and faith (extraordinary) and

healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning, and interpretation of tongues as being among the special gifts, and says, "But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you."—Verse 31. What could be more excellent than swaying multitudes with an inspired tongue? What could be more excellent than penetrating the future with a prophetic eye and bearing to human minds, the secrets that are hid away in the recesses of the unborn ages? What could be more excellent than the gift to restore the sick to health, and the dead to life? But Paul says he will show us something more excellent than all of these. Let us place our hands in that of the great Apostle, and, with open ears and appreciative hearts, go with him while he points out to us that which is more excellent, more glorious, and more to be desired than Spiritual gifts. He constrasts love with spiritual gifts and says, "Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."—i Cor., 13:8-10. By going slowly here and studying closely the Apos-

tle's words, we can locate the time when miracles ceased. In Paul's day, the Corinthian and all other churches, had something which was only in part, but were to soon receive "that which is perfect;" at which time, that which they possessed that was in part, was to cease or be done away. To ascertain what the churches possessed that was in part, what it was they were to soon receive that was perfect, and when it came, will materially assist us in approximating the time when miracles were to cease. 1st, What did the churches possess that was in part? Paul says, "we know in part, and we prophesy in part." The Apostle does not mean to teach that knowledge and prophecy constituted all they had in part, but refers to them as specimens of the whole class of special endowments. Spiritual gifts, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, and tongues and knowledge, (so far as they were supernatural gifts of the Spirit) were in part. 2d, What were the churches to receive that was perfect? It was the written word—the New Testament Scriptures. The Apostle says, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

—ii Tim., 3:16-17. If the New Testament can so thoroughly furnish man as to make him perfect, it can be no less than perfect itself. The New Testament is perfect. James calls it, "the perfect law, the law of liberty."—Jas., 1:25. The study of its sacred pages will make us "wise unto salvation."—ii Tim., 3:15; obeying its truths will purify our souls —(i Peter 1:22), and a close adherence to its commandments will give us an abundant entrance into "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—(ii Peter 1:11.) What else is necessary to make our "calling and election sure?" The New Testament—the written word—is that which is perfect and Paul said that when it came, then that which was in part—miracles—would be done away or cease. Therefore, if we can learn when the books of the New Testament were committed to writing and delivered to the churches we will know when miracles ceased. 3d, When was the written word—the New Testament—delivered to the churches? About the year A. D. Ninety-six, all of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament had been written and were in possession of the churches. While the books were not, at that time, compiled, or bound in one volume, they were carefully preserved, widely circulated, and often read

in the churches. The New International Encyclopaedia, Article, "Bible," says, "The New Testament writings in the Apostolic age.—During this period the New Testament books came into existence. They were, in the majority of cases, produced independently, with no special reference to each other, by various authors at different times, for the use of different communites of individuals. Each book began its career alone. The answer to the question how they came to be collected, united, and constituted the canon or rule for universal Christian faith and practice, is to be sought first in certain characteristics of the Apostolic age. Christianity was not, at first, a book religion. The teachings of Jesus were committed to His Apostles, to be reproduced and proclaimed and taught by them orally, as the gospel. The gospel was authoritative, for it was the gospel of God. Therefore, the words of the Apostles, as the accredited teachers and expounders of the gospel, were accorded the greatest weight. What was true of their spoken words was also true of what they wrote. Hence, when the gospel took on a written form, whether in an epistle or in a narrative of Jesus' words and deeds, written by an Apostle or an intimate companion and fellow worker with the Apostles, such writing was

sure to be carefully preserved, often read, widely circulated, and highly honored. It was a natural result, untrammeled by any theories whatsoever. The evidence for this is abundant throughout the New Testament. Upon these two principles the supreme authority of the gospel itself, and the preeminent right of the Apostles and their intimate associates to teach it, the subsequent career of the New Testament books depend." Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their introductory remarks to Revelation, quote Gregory Nyssen as saying, "All of the books of the New Testament had been written, and read in the church assemblies, some years before John's (the Apostle's) death." According to these standard authorities, all the books of the New Testament were written and were in possession of the churches near the close of the first century. Therefore, when these books—which constitute that which is perfect—came, or were delivered to the churches, miracles ceased. Paul's prediction was fulfilled—that which is perfect had come—the church of Christ had reached its maturity in point of doctrine and organization. Then tongues, knowledge, and prophesying—so far as they were the supernatural gifts of the Spirit—ceased. They were superseded by the ordinary preaching of the word, and miracles

were no longer needed after the Scriptures of the New Testament were collected together and delivered to the churches. Paul continues his explanation at this point by saying, "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things."—i Cor., 13:11. Here the Apostle compares a certain period of the church's existence to childhood, and another period to manhood. Why this comparison? Because—before the New Testament was written—the church was in its childhood state. As a child has not sufficient strength of its own, its mother must lead it, nurse it, and speak for it; but after the child becomes a man, he does not need the same care and nursing which was absolutely indispensable during his childhood existence. So it was with the church. Before the New Testament was written, it was in its childhood state. It had no source from which to derive the knowledge and strength essential to its moral and Spiritual growth, except from inspired men. But when the New Testament was written the church was no longer dependent upon inspired teachers, but its members could learn from the written word, all things essential to the Christian's life, and thus the church passed from its childhood

to its manhood state. The great Apostle continues his argument on this subject by saying, "Now"—before the New Testament was written—before all the facts of the New Covenant were revealed—when we had but an imperfect knowledge of Spiritual things—"we see in a mirror, darkly; but then"—after the New Testament has been written and when, by reading, we can form an accurate conception of our own Spiritual condition—we see "face to face: now"—before there was any written guide—we "know in part; but then"—after the New Testament has been written and we can read of the great principles which must shape and control the Christian's life and can, in the light thereof, examine our own lives—we shall know as we are known. (i Cor., 13:12-13.)

4th, Why did the divine and special power by which miracles were performed, cease in the church? If we can find something that will accomplish the same purpose for which this power was given, we can understand why it ceased. It was given to enable the Apostles and those upon whom they conferred it, to remember and teach the truths of the New Covenant. We don't need it for that purpose now, as we have the New Testament which thoroughly furnishes us for all good works, and we

are commanded to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.—(ii Tim., 2:15.) Before the New Testament was written, miracles were performed that people might believe. They are not necessary for that purpose now, for John says, "many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name."—John 20:30-31. Inspired men were set in the early church, "for the perfecting of the saints."—Eph., 4:12. They are not needed for that purpose now, for the New Testament Scriptures were given that "the man of God may be complete."—ii Tim., 3:17. Miracles served a temporary purpose until the facts, commandments, and promises of the gospel were committed to writing by the hands of inspired men, at which time prophecies, tongues, healing, miraculous knowledge—that which was in part—gave way to the written word—the New Testament—that which is perfect.

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.—Matthew 12:32.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT.

As a Bible basis for this division of our subject, we quote the following from Matthew's gospel:

"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and he healed him, in so much that the dumb man spake and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons. And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can one enter

into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."—Matt., 12:22-32.

We doubt if there is a passage of Scripture, either in the Old or New Testament, that is, in the minds of some Bible readers, surrounded with as much mystery and regarded with as much fear as are the ten verses just quoted. This, like many other New Testament passages, has its theorists, who, by their wrong interpretation of this, our Lord's language, have not only burdened the world with false theories, but have so confused the minds of thousands of honest men and women as, while blinded and bewildered by these erroneous ideas of God's Law, to render them unable to arrive at the truth of the text. One of these theories teaches that the sin against the Holy Spirit is a mystery

and that, while all men are in constant danger of committing it, they are wholly incompetent to comprehend its true nature, or even understand how, where, or when they transgress this hidden and secret Law of God. We will not take the reader's time just here to discuss or show the unscripturalness of this absurd and preposterous teaching, farther than to say that it is not compatible with the goodness and mercy of our heavenly Father to give us a law, the nature and conditions of which it is impossible for us to know, and condemn our souls forever if we fail to keep it. Another theory teaches that the sin against the Holy Spirit is some particular sin or overt act. The advocates of this theory, while they disagree among themselves as to just what constitutes this unpardonable sin, yet, each one is free to tell what, in his opinion, the one act of disobedience to the Law of God, to the exclusion of all others, is the sin against the Holy Spirit. One will tell us that this sin is nothing more nor less than "quenching the Spirit." But we may ask the advocates of this theory what is meant by "quenching the Spirit," and they will tell us that it is one of the "secret things;" and that, since the sinner is totally depraved and is, in every respect, passive—can not act of himself, but that his every

thought and movement in his coming to God are the works of the Holy Spirit—and that he, like a piece of machinery that is driven by some irresistible and unerring power, can move only in the direction and to the end that the Holy Spirit takes him—can not commit the sin for the reason that where there is no ability there can be no accountability; and, as the Christian is "once in grace, always in grace," it is impossible for him to commit it, and therefore they conclude by saying that, "while all men are in danger of committing the sin against the Holy Spirit, yet the real and true nature of the sin is absolutely incomprehensible to the finite mind." Surely such doctrine can not be very "wholesome and very full of comfort." Another theory teaches that the sin against the Holy Spirit is the "act of falling away after being once enlightened;" and still a third one claims that it is the sin of "attributing the power of God to that of Satan." Those who claim that the sin against the Holy Spirit, or the unpardonable sin, is some particular sin or overt act, are confronted by a difficulty which is not easily explained away. We would ask them why it is, if the sin against the Holy Spirit is some specific sin, that, when the same sin is committed against the Father

and Son it is pardonable but when committed against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven in this world or in the world to come? Is the Holy Spirit superior to God and Christ? Does He love us more than the Father and intercede for us more earnestly than the Son? If not, who, in the light of the foregoing theories, can tell why a word spoken or a sin committed against the Holy Spirit is any less pardonable than when against the Father or Son? Still another theory says that the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Spirit when they accused Jesus of casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. The falsity of this position is apparent for two reasons: First, At the time Jesus used this language, "the Holy Spirit was not yet given,"—(John 7:39); and, Second, The Pharisees sinned against Jesus and not against the Holy Spirit. They did not only accuse Him of being possessed and influenced by a devil, but charged Him with being allied with Satan in the ruinous work of spreading sin and moral degradation among the children of men. Hence, they sinned against Jesus and not against the Holy Spirit.

That the New Testament teaches us that there is an unpardonable, or sin against the Holy Spirit, no one who is familiar with its pages will deny.

John says, "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request."—1 John 5:16. If, as some people would have us believe, there is no way of telling what the unpardonable sin is, how can we tell whether our brother is committing the "sin unto death," or one that is pardonable? If we can know nothing about the nature of this sin, are we not liable to blunder by often praying for the forgiveness of the "sin unto death," thinking it will be pardoned, and failing to pray for absolution from another that is pardonable, thinking it is the sin "unto death?"

In order to make as clear and intelligible a presentation of this subject as possible, we will ask and endeavor to give Bible answers to the following questions:

1st, What is the sin against the Holy Spirit? 2d, How can we avoid committing this unpardonable sin?

1st, What is the sin against the Holy Spirit?

While perusing the Bible in our endeavor to find a Scriptural answer to this question, it will be to our advantage if we will remember just here that

the sin against the Holy Spirit, whatever it is, is peculiar to the New Testament age. There is no such a sin mentioned in the Old Testament. True, there was an unpardonable sin under the Jewish dispensation, but it was not against the Holy Spirit; and, unlike some self-styled Bible teachers would have us believe is true in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit, its nature was clearly stated and plainly out-lined, and no Jew ever committed it ignorantly. We ask then, what is the sin against the Holy Spirit? A knowledge of the peculiar or singular nature of this sin is the only means of its identification. This being true then we ask, why was the sin, when committed against the Father and Son during the time that Christ was on earth and even during the centuries preceding it, pardonable; and the same sin, when committed against the Holy Spirit in this age, is not pardonable, neither in this world nor the world to come? In order to answer this question it will be necessary that we refresh our minds on some of the facts that we have already studied. As has been stated in another part of this work, the world, in point of time, has been divided into three periods or dispensations. To suit our convenience just here, we will designate the first period as the dispensation of the Father; the

second, that of the Son; and the third, that of the Holy Spirit. The dispensation of the Father lasted from the creation of all things to the introduction of Christ to the world at His baptism; the dispensation of the Son lasted from His introduction to the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost; and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit had its beginning on Pentecost and will continue as long as time shall last. During the first dispensation, which covered a period of a little more than four thousand years, the Jews, God's chosen people, knew of no divine person, except the Father. While the Son and Holy Spirit have always been co-workers with the Father, both in creation and redemption, they were not known to the world as persons during the first dispensation. Hence, as it was impossible, or, to say the least of it, not compatible with the goodness and mercy of God to hold the Jews responsible for committing a sin against a person about whom they knew nothing, and as the Holy Spirit, as a person, had never been revealed to them, it is easy to understand why the Old Testament says nothing about the sin against the Holy Spirit. During the first dispensation, God was the only divine person known to the world. The Jews looked to Him as their Law-Giver, King, and only object of worship;

and, while they sinned against the Father during His personal reign, their sins were pardonable. God forgave them as often as they would turn from their sins and keep His commandments. At the beginning of the second dispensation, or when Christ was introduced to the world at His baptism, God's direct or personal reign ended, but He "was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," and no man could go to the Father, except by His Son. But one may ask, "How about those who sinned against God and refused to repent under His personal reign or ministry; were their sins pardonable?" The answer to this question is the key that must unlock and open to our understanding the true nature of the sin against the Holy Spirit. At the time God's direct or personal reign ended, there were, no doubt, thousands of disobedient Jews, and it was impossible for them to have been saved under the direct reign of the Father, because it was ended; but, notwithstanding they had rebelled against God, denied His word, and rejected His plan of saving them, they had a chance to repent and be saved when the Son came. Jesus pardoned their sins when they turned to Him. "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." When the Jews who had lived and rebelled against God under

the first dispensation, heard Jesus preaching to the great crowds of people that were attracted to Him by His wonderful words and miracles, many of them signified their intention of becoming His disciples without making restitution for the wrongs committed under the former dispensation. but Jesus told them to "repent toward God and believe the gospel." He placed repentance before faith because they had been under the reign of the Father until Jesus entered upon His personal ministry and, as they had believed in and rebelled against God, they had to repent of their former sins before they could receive any blessings offered by the Son. The same thing was true with regard to Christ's personal ministry. His dispensation lasted about three and one-half years, during which time He healed the sick, forgave sinners, and taught the great truths pertaining to His future Kingdom. But one may ask, "Did God offer to pardon the sins of the men who accused Jesus of being allied with Satan, and those who put Him to death?" He did. Jesus said, "and whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him." While in His death agony on the cross, Jesus prayed to His Father to forgive those who pierced His side and sent the crude nails crashing through His feet

which never pressed the path of sin, and pinned to a cross of shame His sinless hands, which never knew any mission but that of love. O, the fathomless depths of His wonderful love! He laid down His life for His enemies. We should strive to be like Him. One may ask, "When was pardon offered to those who crucified Christ?" Not under His personal ministry, it ended when Jesus died on the cross. So far as the dispensation of the Son was concerned, the enemies of Christ had sinned away their day of grace. But they had another chance to be saved. Do you ask when? Under the third dispensation, when the Holy Spirit came on the Pentecost following Christ's resurrection and, conditioned upon obedience to the gospel, offered salvation to those who had, "taken, and by wicked hands had crucified and slain the Lord of glory." Now we ask, Why was the sin against the Father pardonable? Because, if the people rejected Him and His plan of saving them under the first dispensation, they had a chance to be saved when the Son came. Why was the sin against the Son pardonable? Because the people who rejected Him and His plan of saving them during His personal ministry, had another chance to be saved when the Holy Spirit came with the conditions of the gospel.

Why is the sin against the Holy Spirit not pardonable? Because this, the Holy Spirit's dispensation, is the last one. There is no other God, no other Christ, no other Holy Spirit, or gospel to be offered to man—this is the last chance—the last appeal that God will make to man. If he refuses to hear the Holy's Spirit's testimony, and rejects the conditions of salvation which God, through the Holy Spirit, has offered to the world, and persists in so doing, some time the last opportunity will pass, the sin will be consummated, and he will be lost forever.

The great truths relative to the sin against the Holy Spirit may be more clearly brought out by the following illustration: An implement firm, consisting of a father and two sons, sells a wagon to a certain man and takes a mortgage on his team to secure payment. The note comes due, but the ungrateful purchaser disregards his obligation by refusing to make prompt settlement. The members of the firm, desiring to be as easy on their debtor as possible, agree to give him three opportunities or chances to make his payment. Accordingly, the father goes to him with a proposition which is utterly disregarded by the purchaser, but they do not close him out, as they have agreed among them-

selves to give him two more chances. The older son goes to him with another proposition, but it meets with the same disregard and contempt as did that of his father. Still they do not close the mortgage, but the son warns the purchaser that, while the rejection of the courtesies offered by his father and himself would be no longer remembered, his brother, the third member of the firm, would come with another proposition, which would be the last one they would make him and, if he refused to accept and comply with the conditions stipulated in it, the mortgage would be immediately closed that settlement might be promptly secured. So it is with regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit. In order that we may see clearly the application, let the members of the firm represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the ungrateful purchaser represent the human family since the creation of Adam. (God's Laws were made for the whole human family, and not for just one individual.) Man is and always has been debtor to God. In order that he might make restitution for the wrongs committed against his Maker, God, through Moses and the prophets, came and for four thousand years pleaded with man, but He was denied and His word disregarded. Notwithstanding man rejected God, He

did not cast him off, but sent His Son with another proposition—means of salvation. But ungrateful and sinful man crucified the Son of God and, with unholy feet, walked upon His sacred Law. Still God's mercy is extended to man—He does not cast him off, but the Son tells him that, while he had rejected and sinned against His Father and Himself, such sins would be forgiven, but warned man by telling him that the Holy Spirit would come with another law which would be the last appeal God would make to him and, if he refused to accept and comply with the conditions of it, he would be lost forever, because God had no other law or gospel to offer him. Suppose, when man rejected the Father, He should have decided to not send His Son, or when he rejected the Son, He should have decided to not send the Holy Spirit, man would have been forever doomed.

What then, is the sin against the Holy Spirit? The same as was the sin against the Father and Son. How did man sin against God under the first dispensation? He rejected Him by refusing to accept and obey His word. How did he sin against the Son? By rejecting Him and His teaching. What is the sin against the Holy Spirit? The act of rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit. How

is that done? The first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, was the day on which the third or Holy Spirit's dispensation began on earth. On that day the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles to inspire them to both speak and write the truths of the New Covenant. We can not hear the words of the Holy Spirit today speaking through men as did the people on the day of Pentecost, and various other occasions during the first century, but we have the New Testament which, while written by the Apostles, was dictated to them by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the New Testament is the medium through which the Holy Spirit speaks to us today. On its sacred pages are written the words and thoughts of the Holy Spirit. By believing what it says, we believe what the Holy Spirit says, by receiving what it says, we receive what the Holy Spirit says, and by rejecting what it says, we reject what the Holy Spirit says. In short, to believe and obey what the New Testament teaches, is to believe and obey what the Holy Spirit teaches, and to reject the New Testament by refusing to believe what it teaches and obey what it commands, is to reject the Holy Spirit. Through the New Testament, the Holy Spirit tells us that there is a God who is an all wise and loving Father, a Christ who

loved us in so much that He died for us, a heaven prepared for the righteous, and a hell for the wicked. But he who says there is no God, no Christ, no heaven, or no hell, makes the Holy Spirit out a liar; and therefore, rejects Him. To thus reject the Holy Spirit, is to reject God and Christ, for they, through the Holy Spirit as the active agent, are engaged in the work of saving sinners and edifying the saints. One says, "I have always believed that infidelity is the sin against the Holy Spirit, but I am in no danger of committing it, because I am not an infidel." Yes, infidelity will damn the soul, but how about the man who believes all the New Testament teaches, but refuses to obey it? Is it any worse to refuse to believe than it is to refuse to obey what the Holy Spirit says? Can a son honor his father by believing what he says and refusing to do what he commands? Through the New Testament, the Holy Spirit says, "and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might."—ii Thes., 1:7-9. In

this passage of Scripture the Holy Spirit emphatically declares that men and women who refuse to obey the gospel of Christ will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Believing alone will not save them, but they must purify their souls in their "obedience to the truth."—(i Peter 1:22.) "But," says one, "if your position be true, there is no use for me to obey the gospel now, because I have already sinned against the Holy Spirit." We ask, How and when did that happen? "I," he continues, "attended church last Lord's day and heard a splendid sermon, at the close of which the minister made a strong appeal to sinners to accept Christ. I knew the man was preaching the truth and realized the fact that I was a sinner, and should have obeyed the gospel, but I refused to accept Christ and rejected the teaching and commandments given by the Holy Spirit; and therefore, according to your position, I sinned against the Holy Spirit." Suppose our objector's position were true? Suppose that because he refused to accept the gospel the first time it ever made an impression on him, God would have never given him another chance to obey Him, although he might live and enjoy good health for a number of years? As a result of their

having been influenced by false teachers, some men and women are laboring under the impression that the Holy Spirit comes on certain occasions, most generally when there is a protracted meeting in progress, pleads with sinners for a little while and then goes away as if offended. Such is not the case. We are living under the Holy Spirit's reign—this is His administration—through His appointed medium, He is always pleading with sinners to become obedient to the gospel. This thought might be illustrated by referring to the dispensation of the Father and Son. Under the first dispensation man sinned against God, but as long as the opportunity lasted to return and be accepted by Him, he could have been pardoned by the Father under His personal or direct reign. But by waiting until the opportunity, by reason of the ending of the first or Father's direct reign, was passed, his sins, so far as that particular reign was concerned, were unpardonable. During Christ's personal ministry, man sinned against Him, but his sins were pardonable under that dispensation until it ended, but after that time, so far as Christ's personal ministry was concerned, they were unpardonable. So it is with sinning against the Holy Spirit. We may have rejected the Christ yesterday, and have an oppor-

tunity to obey Him today. The sin against the Holy Spirit is never completed until the last chance to render acceptable obedience to the gospel is passed. We have no way of telling when that time will come. All we know is that, "today is the day of salvation and now is the accepted time."

2d, How may we avoid committing the sin against the Holy Spirit?

By doing God's will. If we would avoid committing the sin against the Holy Spirit, let us study God's Word, believe all it teaches, do all it commands, and God will give us a crown of eternal life.

THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CONVERSION OF THE SINNER

THE HOLY SPIRIT

For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe—i Corinthians 1:21.

CHAPTER V.

THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CONVERSION OF THE SINNER.

That the Holy Spirit has an agency in the conversion of every sinner, no one who has any acquaintance with the Bible teaching on the subject will deny. But the question in which we are most interested, and which confronts us just here, is not, "Does He operate on the sinner's heart?" but rather, "How does He do His work in conversion?" "How does He wield an influence over the minds of the unsaved?" Does He, in some mysterious way, as some preachers tell us, fall upon the alien's heart like the rain upon the earth, or the sun's rays upon the rose bud—without any medium whatever? In the minds of the professed followers of Christ are two theories treating upon this question, the advocates of which claim to be able to tell just how the Holy Spirit makes Christians out of sinners. These theories are, in point of teaching, conflicting and directly opposed to each other.

For centuries the strongest adherents of these doctrines have met upon many battlefields, and, strewn along the pathway of time, are to be seen old so-called theological swords (false doctrines), broken and rust covered, which were inadequate to ward off the blows of their opposers and, like the hands that wielded them, are now stilled. But, while many of the champions of each cause have dropped out of the ranks, the conflict is not over. New weapons have been forged, other recruits have arrived, and the battle still rages—no decided victory has been won, but, kneeling at the shrine of each theory are to be seen thousands of worshippers of equal honesty and intelligence.

One of these theories teaches that, in conversion, the Holy Spirit operates directly and without any medium upon the sinner's heart. This theory is the foundation upon which a great many unscriptural and useless institutions have been built and is the very heart and life out of which so many false doctrines have grown. Mormonism, with its crime and shame stained history, is a legitimate child of this theory. Without it Mormonism would have never been born. It was a supposed direct impression from God upon the mind of Joe Smith that gave birth to the Mormon church. It was a

supposed direct impression of the Holy Spirit upon the Pope of Rome that, in the minds of some people, makes him infallible and lifts him above his fellowman. It was a supposed direct impression made by the Holy Spirit upon the mind of Chas. Guiteau that robed him in a fiendish garb and, in the name of a religion which knows no hate, caused him to take the life of James A. Garfield. You may object to this by saying, "I believe in the abstract, independent, and mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the sinner, but I think these men whom you have mentioned were mistaken. They were not guided by the Holy Spirit." If they were mistaken, is there not a possibility of you being mistaken also? If you take the supposed direct impression of the Holy Spirit upon your heart as the means and evidence of pardon, you are, at least as far as evidence goes, on a par with the Pope of Rome, Joe Smith, and Chas. Guiteau. While the ultimate end to which you think your faith will lead you may differ from theirs as wide as the sea, yet the evidence upon which you predicate your belief is the same as that which gives credence and weight to their claims, especially among those who conform to their way of thinking. They imagined they felt some strange

influence come over them. So did you. They supposed it was the influence of the Holy Spirit. So did you. To them there were no words spoken or intelligible signs made. Neither were there any words spoken or signs made to you. The Pope supposed it meant one thing, Joe Smith another, and Chas. Guiteau still another, while you interpret the same kind of an impression as they had and received in just the same way that they received theirs, to mean that your sins are pardoned. Can you give one reason why thinking men and women should reject their claims and accept yours?

We pause here long enough to give four reasons why we think the theory of the abstract, independent, and mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner's heart is not correct.

1st, The theory is not in keeping with the constitution of the mind of man, or in harmony with the Divine plan. God created man an intelligent being and gave him an intelligible language. From the very beginning of the history of man, words, either spoken or written, have constituted the medium through which intelligence has been and is conveyed from the mind of the infinite to that of the finite. When God wished to convey some intelligence to Adam and Eve, He employed words,

and not some unintelligible impression or influence. He said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."—Gen., 1:28. When He wanted Noah to build the ark He spoke to him in words addressed and adapted to his understanding. Words, either written or spoken, have always constituted the medium through which God has conveyed information to His creatures. Before the Bible was reduced to writing, the words were spoken; sometimes by the Father and the Son, while at other times by angels or some man whom the Holy Spirit inspired for that purpose. Peter says, "no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." —ii Peter 1:21. But inspiration ceased with the completion of the New Testament and today we have the written word which, when faithfully read, will "make us wise unto salvation," and when obeyed from the heart, will make us "free from sin." Faith is the first essential to man's salvation. This comes, not by mere feeling or, as some would have us believe, by the abstract and independent operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, but by

hearing. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."—Rom., 10:17. John says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear (not feel) what the Spirit saith to the churches."—Rev. 3:22. A dumb unintelligible impression made upon the heart can not convey intelligence. The constitution of the mind of man is such that it can not receive information from the infinite mind, except through intelligible words or signs. The theory of the abstract, independent, and mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner's heart has neither.

2d. This theory can not be right because where the Bible has never been read or preached, there is no knowledge of God. If the Holy Spirit operates independent of the written or spoken Word, why are there not thousands of well informed Christian men and women in countries where the Bible has never been introduced? Such places would constitute splendid fields for the Holy Spirit to work. The doctrine of a dumb unintelligible impression made on the heart, did not have its origin among Christianized people, but among the heathen—those who had only a tradition or superstitution. It was a supposed direct impression or operation of God that caused loving mothers to cast their children into the arms of a burning idol, or throw them into the

Ganges to be devoured by the crocodiles, hoping thereby to appease the wrath of their god. Surely, if there is any truth in such a doctrine, instead of encouraging such a heathenish and inhumane practice, it would stay the hand of those innocent mothers and lift the thousands of poor misinformed worshippers from an idol's shrine. But there is no truth in the theory. The way of God is plain—so plain that the wayfaring men, though they be simpletons, need not err therein. Paul says the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. Jesus says, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto me."—John 6:45. Words, either written or spoken, constitute the medium through which the Holy Spirit operates. Where the gospel is faithfully preached, darkness gives way to light, sin to righteousness, God is honored and sinners saved.

3d. The zealous advocates of the theories of the abstract, independent, and mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and the miraculous call to the ministry, are not in possession of any information, save that which they have learned from the reading of the Bible. What do they know about

God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the life to come, that the ordinary reader can not learn by a faithful perusal of the Old and New Testaments? Nothing. Not one of them knows more, while the majority of them know much less about the Bible and the Christian life than the careful and prayerful Bible reader. Hence, our third reason for believing the theory is wrong.

4th, We believe the theory of the abstract, independent, and mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit upon the sinner's heart is wrong, because the Bible nowhere teaches it.

In opposition to the theory stated, and as a proposition embodying the Bible teaching on the subject, we affirm that, in conversion, the Holy Spirit puts forth His convincing and converting power upon the sinner's heart, only through some medium. The Holy Spirit has always strove with men. In the days of Noah, God said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years."—Gen., 6:3. How did His Spirit strive with man? Let the Bible tell us. "Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testifieth against them by thy Spirit through thy prophets."—Neh., 9:30. Paul says, "Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah

the prophet unto your fathers.''—Acts 28:25. Again, Peter says, ''no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.''—ii Peter 1:21. From these Scriptures we learn that the prophets were the mediums through which the Holy Spirit operated upon the hearts of sinners during the Old Testament times and that words were the means employed.

But we are not so much interested in knowing how the Holy Spirit operated on the unsaved under the Old Testament as we are under the New. Therefore, the question in which we are most concerned just now is, ''How does the Holy Spirit operate upon the sinner's heart in his conversion to God under the present or Christian dispensation?'' In this, we should be willing to be governed by what the Word of God says, as it is the only source from which we can gain any light upon the subject. By turning to the Bible, we learn that, since the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit has put forth His convincing and converting power upon the hearts of sinners in the following ways:

1st, From the beginning of the gospel reign on Pentecost, until near the close of the first century of the Christian era, the Holy Spirit operated on

the unsaved by speaking to them through inspired men. While God, as is recorded in Acts 8:26, and 10:3-6, some times used angels to bring the sinner and inspired teacher together, He never pardoned one man without the agency of another, or did the Holy Spirit ever tell a sinner what to do to be saved, except through some man. A voice from heaven spoke to Saul, but it was left for Ananias to tell him what he had to do. (Acts 9:1-17.) An angel was the first to speak to Cornelius, but it was necessary that he send to Joppa for Peter, that he might tell him words whereby he and his house could be saved. (Acts 10:1-9; 11:1-18.) We suppose that God could have told Saul and Cornelius just what Ananias and Peter told them, but He had committed unto men the ministry of reconciliation, (ii Cor., 5:19) and, in no instance, did God ever wrest the keys of the Kingdom from the hands of His faithful servants, or deviate from His plan of saving man through the "foolishness of preaching." (Matt., 16:19; John 20:22-23; ii Tim., 2-2.) On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit operated upon the multitudes assembled at Jerusalem and three thousand souls were saved. How did He operate on them? By speaking through Peter and the other Apostles, and not directly to the sinners.

"And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."—Acts 2:3-4. Thus was fulfilled Christ's promise to them, "for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."—Matt., 10:20. By studying some of the cases of conversions recorded in the book of Acts, we can more easily understand just how the Holy Spirit operated upon the hearts of the unsaved during the first seventy years of the church's existence. We will now examine the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. To bring about his conversion God used an angel, the Holy Spirit, the evangelist Philip, and the gospel of His Son. What did each of them do? Let the Bible tell us. "But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert."—Acts 8:26. Here the mission of the angel ceased—his was to direct the evangelist to the sinner—he spoke to Philip, but said not a word to the eunuch. "And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopa, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had

come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah."—Verses 27-28. "And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."—Verse 29. Notice that the Holy Spirit, like the angel, spoke to Philip, not to the eunuch. "And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him."—Verses 30-31. How was the eunuch taught? "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing."—Verses 35-39. From these Scriptures we learn that, in order to bring about this conversion, the angel, Holy Spirit, Philip, and the eunuch all did something. What did they do,

and why did they do it? 1st, The angel and Holy Spirit did not speak to the sinner, as some people claim they do now, but they spoke to Philip, in order that the preacher and sinner might be brought together. Here the mission of both, the angel and the Holy Spirit, so far as any extra or special work in this particular case of conversion was concerned, ceased. The Holy Spirit spoke to the eunuch, but only through Philip. 2d, Philip taught the eunuch in order that he might learn what to do to be saved. And 3d, The eunuch made himself free from sin and became a servant of righteousness by obeying "from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered" to him through Philip's preaching. One may ask, "How did the Holy Spirit operate upon the eunuch's heart?" We answer this question by saying that the Holy Spirit operated upon the eunuch's heart through the words of Philip; and, in proof of this assertion we quote again the thirty-fifth verse which says, "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus."

The next case of conversion to which we call attention, is that of Lydia. It reads as follows: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give

heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."—Acts 16:14:15. Touching upon this case of conversion, are two questions which claim our attention. The first one is, "How did God open Lydia's heart? Did He do this by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit?" No. She was neither totally depraved or unwilling to hear, but on the other hand she was a devout believer in God and, while away from home on a business trip, attended a river side prayer meeting in the hope, doubtless, of being edified and taught the more perfect way of the God in whom she already believed. While attending this meeting, she heard Paul preach the gospel of Christ in its fullness, by which God opened her heart, enlightened her mind, and she was converted. But the influence of the Holy Spirit upon her heart did not begin until Paul's preaching saluted her ears. The second question bearing upon this case of conversion is, "How did the Holy Spirit operate upon Lydia's heart?" The Bible says, she "gave heed unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit and taught not "in words which

man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.''—i Cor., 2:13. The Holy Spirit, using Paul as His medium through which to speak to Lydia, put forth His convincing and converting power upon her heart.

2d, Since the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit has operated upon the hearts of the unsaved through the practical exhibition of the Christian religion in the lives of the disciples of Christ. In this manner of His operating upon the sinner's heart, He does not impart any information or teaching except by example. The Christian's life is a life of power for righteousness. Jesus said to His disciples, ''Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill can not be hid. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.''—Matt., 5:14-16. Again, Peter says, ''Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behavior seemingly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good

works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil doers, and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."—i Peter 2:11-15.

3d, Since the New Testament was reduced to writing, the Holy Spirit has put forth His convicting and converting power upon the heart of the sinner, through the written Word. The great truths of the New Testament were dictated to the Apostles and other inspired writers by the Holy Spirit. Paul says, "we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth."—i Cor., 2:13. Therefore, he who reads or hears some faithful preacher expound the truths of the New Covenant, hears the words of the Holy Spirit; and, if his heart responds to the teaching, he is influenced or persuaded to turn from his sins and lead a better life by the Holy Spirit operating upon him through the New Testament. Who, if his heart is not right in the sight of God, can read the New Testament without feeling condemned? The power by which

God convinces and converts the sinner, is contained in the gospel. Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith."—Rom., 1:16-17. Solomon says, "For the king's word hath power."—Ecc., 8:4. The New Testament is the Word of God and contains His power unto salvation. The Holy Spirit, operating through the written Word, convicts the sinner of his sins. Not only that, but the Holy Spirit, operating through this medium, makes him who would be saved, wise unto salvation. Paul said to Timothy, "and that from a babe thou has known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—ii Tim., 3:15. Again, David says, "the law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple."—Ps., 19-7. The following things are necessary to the salvation of the sinner: (a) He must have faith. This the Holy Spirit produces in his heart through the New Testament. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."—Rom., 10:17. (b) He must

repent of his sins. The goodness of God leads him to repentance. (Rom., 2:4.) The Holy Spirit reveals to him the goodness or love of God for the world through the New Testament. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotton Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John 3:16. (c) He must confess Christ before men. This fact the Holy Spirit reveals to him through the written Word. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."—Matt., 10:32-33. (d) He must be baptized into Christ. This fact is also made known to him by the Holy Spirit through the New Testament. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."—Gal., 3:27. (e) He must add to his faith all the christian graces. The Holy Spirit, through the New Testament, tells him what these graces are. (ii Peter 1:5-7) and concludes by saying to him that if he will do these things, there shall be richly supplied unto him the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (ii Peter 1:11). Truly is the New Testament, as given by the Holy Spirit,

sufficient for man. It is "inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."—ii Tim., 3:16-17. What more does man want, or what more does he need?

THE BIRTH OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he can not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God. —John 3:3-5.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BIRTH OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT.

The subject of the "New Birth," or, using the exact Bible phrase, the birth of "water and of the Spirit," is one of vast importance to all who have any interest in the teaching of the Bible. In order to understand this subject thoroughly, it is necessary that we study closely and prayerfully the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus. It reads as follows:

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he can not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—John 3:1-8.

Before we enter into the main discussion of this subject, we want to call attention to three thoughts that are suggested by this Scripture which, if we study them closely, will materially assist us in arriving at the truth of the text. They are, (a) Jesus uses no qualifying word before the noun, "water," but uses the definite article or adjective before the noun, "Spirit," thus showing that, in order to enter into the kingdom of God, a person must be born of "water"—any water—and "the Spirit"—a certain or definite Spirit—the Holy Spirit. (b) "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This particular phrase in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus has caused no little discussion among the follow-

ers of Christ. Some preachers declare that the birth of water and of the Spirit is a great mystery —that the Spirit comes like the wind—does His work in some mysterious and miraculous way, passes on and you can not tell from what direction He comes, how He does His work in conversion, or anything about Him. These men are badly mistaken in their views on this subject. Jesus never said a word about the process by which a person is born of water and of the Spirit, being a mystery, or like the wind either. What did He say? His words are: "the wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The phrase, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit," lifts the mystery, if there be any, from the process by which a man is born into the kingdom, and places it on the person, and that, too, after he is born and not while he is "being" born. Jesus nowhere teaches that the way in which a person is "born again," is a mystery, but on the other hand the Bible tells us that the way of salvation from sin is so plain that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (c) Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit,

he can not enter into the kingdom of God." From this language we learn that the birth of water and the Spirit, whatever it is, is necessary to one's entering into the kingdom of God; and that no person of sound mind and mature years can be saved without it, for no one with any knowledge of the Bible will contend that he can have his sins pardoned, be a true follower of Christ, and at the same time be outside of the kingdom of God.

What did Jesus mean by the expression, "born of water and the Spirit?" This subject will not be hard to understand if we will bear in mind that, before the New Will or Testament was confirmed by the death of Christ, and while He was yet on the earth, He taught in parables and figures. Matthew says, "all these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes: and without a parable spake He nothing unto them."—Matt., 13:34. To illustrate, while fore-telling the growth of His kingdom, Jesus used the parable of the mustard seed, and while teaching the people of God's anxiety for the salvation of every soul, He used the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. Jesus did not deviate from this manner of teaching when in this conversation with Nicodemus. In this intercourse He was laboring to teach him how he could be sav-

ed from his sins under the gospel reign which He, through His Apostles, was soon to establish on the earth; and, in His effort to enlighten the mind of this great Jewish ruler, He took up the figure of the fleshly or natural birth. Surely then, there must be some similarity between the way in which a child is born into the natural world and the way in which a man is born into the kingdom of God. Therefore let us study the natural or fleshly birth, in order that we may learn something about the way in which we pass out of death into life.

1st, In order to a birth, either natural or Spiritual, there must be parentage—a father and a mother. Who then, are our Spiritual parents? (a) The Bible teaches us that God is our Spiritual Father. The proof for this is abundant. Jesus taught His disciples to address God in their prayers as, "our Father who art in heaven."—Matt., 6:9. Paul says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father."—Rom., 1:7. Again, John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall

be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see Him even as He is."—i John 3:1-2. Other Scriptures might be quoted, but these are sufficient to prove that God is our Spiritual Father. (b) Who, or what is our Spiritual mother? Metaphorically, or figuratively speaking, the Church of Christ is our Spiritual mother. The reader will please bear in mind that types and figures, while they are numerous throughout both the Old and New Testaments, their analogical significance must be limited, and not pressed too far. To illustrate, Jesus is called a lion, but the inspired writer did not intend to convey the idea that Jesus is like a lion in every particular, but only in His noble, heroic, and unconquerable nature. The lion roars, bounds upon, and devours his innocent victim and is therefore, in this and many other respects, unlike Christ. So it is with the Church of Christ. While the Bible represents it as being our Spiritual mother, we must remember that it is used in a metaphorical sense and, like all other expressions of this kind, must be kept within the limits of its analogical meaning. That the Bible represents the Church of Christ as being our Spiritual mother, is evident from the following Scriptures: Paul in his allegory, refers to the New Covenant, or the Church of Christ, as the

free woman, the Jerusalem that is above, "which is our mother."—Gal., 4:26. The heavenly Jerusalem, answering in the allegory, to the free woman, is the Church—our Spiritual mother; hence, in the thirty-first verse the Apostle says, "wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the free woman." Here we see that the New Covenant, or the Church, is represented as a woman and that Paul tells the Hebrew Christians that they are her children. Isaiah looked down the ages and when his prophetical gaze rested upon the Church of Christ, he said, "for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."—Isa., 66:8. All through this chapter Isaiah represents Zion (the Church) as possessing all the elements of motherhood. He continues by saying, "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith Jehovah: shall I that cause to bring forth shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her; that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that we may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an

overflowing stream: and ye shall suck thereof; ye shall be borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."—Verses 9-13. Who will deny that Isaiah had reference to the Church of Christ? The elements of motherhood are just such as can best illustrate the kindness, tenderness, and nourishment afforded by the Church to those whom she has been instrumental in saving from a life of sin. Her little children who are "born again," and who "desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby," lie nestled in the Church's bosom as quietly and as free from fear and danger as the innocent babe in its mother's arms. It is the motherhood element in the church that affords a perpetual and untiring watch care over her children. They can not travel beyond the boundaries of her maternal love, or sink so deep in sin that she will not extend to them an arm of salvation and plant the kiss of forgiveness upon the sin mired cheeks of her returning children. When they are sick, she calls the "great Physician," when they are thirsty, she gives them water from the "living fountain," and when they are hungry, she feeds them on "the bread of life." Add to this then, the

love and unerring counsel of our heavenly Father, and the figure is both beautiful and complete. God is our Spiritual Father and the Church of Christ is represented in the Bible as our Spiritual mother.

2d, In order to a birth, the subject must be begotten by the father. This is true in both the natural and Spiritual birth. Therefore, in order for us to be "born anew," or "born of water and the Spirit," we must be begotten of God. John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."—i John 5:1. In the eighteenth verse of this same chapter we have this language, "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not." Somebody may ask, "How does God beget us?" Let the Bible tell us. James says, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."—James 1:18. Peter says, "having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth."—i Peter 1:23. Again, Paul says, "For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many

fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel."—i Cor., 4:15. From these Scriptures we learn that the "word of truth," which is the gospel of Christ, is the means by which God begets us. But some one may ask just here, "If it is God that begets, what did Paul mean by saying to the Corinthians, that 'I begat you?'" We will answer this by saying that the "Gospel of Christ" is the Spiritual seed by which we are begotten and, while God is its author, He has committed the ministry of reconciliation into the hands of men (ii Cor., 5:18), and has ordained that His faithful servants should preach it to every creature of earth, that He might, "through the foolishness of the preaching, save them that believe." (i Cor., 1:21.) Hence, when Paul preached to the Corinthians and they heard and believed the truths he preached, they were begotten of Paul insomuch that he was the agent through which the preaching was done, and they were also begotten of God insomuch that He is the author of the truths preached. To illustrate, Mr. Sanders gives Mr. Gray a check for two hundred dollars and tells him to go and buy a certain horse. Mr. Gray takes the money, buys the horse, and delivers him to Mr. Sanders. Who bought the horse? Is any one prepared to affirm that Mr. Gray pur-

chased the horse and that Mr. Sanders had nothing to do with the transaction? No. Mr. Gray bought the horse insomuch that he negotiated or brought about his purchase, and Mr. Sanders bought him insomuch that he furnished the means by which the purchase was made. So it was with Paul. He begat the Corinthians insomuch that he preached to them the gospel which was able to make them wise unto salvation; and God begat them insomuch that He is the author of the word of life which was able to and did save their souls. Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—Rom., 1:16. From this quotation we learn that faith or belief is one of the essentials to the new birth. How is faith produced? In some miraculous way? No. God has ordained that faith shall be produced in the alien's heart by words spoken by His faithful servants. Peter says, "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."—Acts 15:7. Paul corroborates Peter's statment by saying, "so belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."—Rom., 10:17. Again, the words of our Saviour to His Apostles when He gave them the

world wide commission prove conclusively that our position is correct. He said, "all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Matt., 28:18-20. Somebody may ask, "As none of the Apostles are living, who is commissioned to preach the gospel now?" Paul says to Timothy, "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."—ii Tim., 2:2. By summing up what we have gone over, we learn the following things: (a) God is our Spiritual Father; (b) the Church of Christ is our Spiritual mother; (c) God begets us by the word of truth; (d) that the gospel is God's power unto salvation to every one who believes it; (e) that the preaching of the gospel to the sinner produces faith in his heart; and, (f) that God has ordained that "faithful men" should preach the gospel to every creature of earth.

Some one, doubtless, is ready to ask, "Is a man born again as soon as he believes?" Why not ask,

"Is a child born as soon as it is begotten?" Devils believed and trembled, (Jas. 2:19) and acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, (Mark 3:11). Were they born again? Jesus told a certain class of Jews who believed on Him that they were of their father, the devil, and that the lusts of him they did. (John 8:31-44). Were they born again? A person can believe in Christ and be penitent and not be born again. Such was Paul or Saul's condition before Ananias told him what he must do that his sins might be washed away. (Acts 9:1-18; 22:1-16). Again, a person can believe, be pentitent, moral, and alms giving and not be born again. This was Cornelius' condition before Peter told him words whereby he and his house could be saved. (Acts 10:1-2; 11:1-14.) In both of these cases, we see that it was necessary for some man to tell these pentitent believers what they had to do to be saved. At the very beginning of the gospel reign on earth, God committed the keys of the Kingdom of heaven and the ministry of reconciliation into the hands of men, (Matt., 16:19; John 20:21-23; ii Cor., 5:18) and there is not a case on record where God, since the death of His Son, ever pardoned one man without the agency of another man.

When a man believes the gospel and, with

meekness, receives it into an honest heart, he is begotten of God and is ready or prepared to be born. The vital principle of the Spiritual life is implanted in his heart, but he is no more born Spiritually when he first believes, or believes only, than he was born physically the moment he was conceived. The office of a birth is not to give life, but to bring life which is previously possessed, into a state of independent existence. When a person believes the gospel, he is begotten of God and can either accept or refuse the God appointed means by which he can be born into the Kingdom of heaven. Here the analogy between the natural and Spiritual birth is broken. In his physical birth, the man had no agency in either being begotten or born. But not so with regard to his Spiritual birth. In it he has an agency. He can hear, believe, and obey the gospel and thus be born into the Kingdom of God, or he can, as many do, refuse the Bible conditions of salvation and be lost forever. A birth is a transition—a changing from one state to another—or the beginning of a new life. The New Testament contains a great many expressions and figures, the meaning of which is in perfect harmony with the idea expressed in the phrase, "born again." Paul told the brethren at Rome that they had received

the "Spirit of adoption" (Rom., 8:15), and told those at Colosse that God had translated them "into the Kingdom of the Son of his love." (Col., 1:13.) If a man is adopted into the family of God or translated into the Kingdom of His Son, his state is changed—he is born again.

Somebody is ready to say, "Explain the birth of water and the Spirit. What is it?" When we study this subject in connection with other parts of the Scriptures, it is easily understood. Before the New Testament was confirmed by His death, and while His Kingdom was still in prospect, Jesus taught in parables and figures, but after the establishment of the kingdom, parables and figures gave way to facts, commandments, and promises. Parables and figures ended at the cross and the facts, commandments, and promises of the gospel began at Pentecost. It was during the time that parables and figures were used, that Christ spoke to Nicodemus. He used the figure of a birth to teach Nicodemus what he would have to do to be saved under the gospel reign which was soon to be inaugurated. To the end that Nicodemus and every other creature of gospel address might have an opportunity to learn the way into the Kingdom which was soon to be establish-

ed, Jesus chose twelve Apostles and, after having taught them the great truths of His prospective Kingdom for almost three and a half years, He said to them, "these things have I spoken to you in dark sayings: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father."—John 16:25. In other words, He said, now—before the New Will is confirmed—before the Kingdom is established—I speak to you in dark sayings, (parables) but the time is coming—after the New Will is confirmed by my death—after the Kingdom is established—when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs, but will strip the great facts of the gospel of their parabolical meaning and speak to you plainly. To enable His Apostles to carry out His world wide commission after the Kingdom was established, Jesus promised them the keys of the Kingdom, (Matt., 16:19; John 20:22), all authority in heaven and in earth, so far as the proclamation of the gospel was concerned (Matt., 28:18-19; John 17:18; 20:21), and the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:13). When Christ died on the cross, the Law of Moses ended (Col., 2:14), the New Testament was confirmed (Heb., 9:15-18) and, when the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles on Pentecost, the Spirit-

ual reign began. (Acts 11:15.) Parables had given away to facts—things which had been spoken in proverbs or figures, had then to be spoken "plainly." Now, in the light of these facts before us, let us study the birth of water and of the Spirit. Christ, speaking in a figure, told Nicodemus that the way into the Kingdom of God, was by a birth of water and the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, Peter, while inspired by the Holy Spirit, said to the three thousand souls whose heart had been pricked by the gospel message, "repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."—Acts 2:38. No one can be in the Kingdom of God without having his sins remitted, or can he have his sins remitted without being in the Kingdom of God. (The same process that makes a person a Christian, makes him a member of the Church of Christ.) When preceded by other gospel requirements, baptism puts us into Christ. Paul says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."—Gal., 3:27. To be in Christ is to be in the Kingdom, seeing that Christ's body is the Church. Paul says, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of

Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."—Col., 1:24. Therefore, since the three thousand on Pentecost were baptized into Christ where they could not have entered without being "born of water and the Spirit," it follows that what Peter told the people on Pentecost, was the same as that which Christ told Nicodemus, as it gave them the remission of their sins and put them into the Kingdom of God. Somebody may ask, "why didn't Peter tell the people on Pentecost just what Christ told Nicodemus?" He did. Christ spoke to Nicodemus while His Kingdom was in prospect and, therefore, spoke in a "proverb." (John 16:25) while Peter spoke after the Kingdom was established and, instead of using a figure as Christ did, he stripped the gospel command of its parabolical nature and spoke the truth plainly.

Another one may ask here, "What is meant by 'water' and 'Spirit?' How is a man born of them?" We answer that a man is born of water as a means appointed of the Spirit, just in the same sense that he is begotten by the gospel, as a means appointed of our heavenly Father for that purpose. When a man believes the gospel, repents of his sins, confesses Christ, and is immersed into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he is born of water

and the Spirit. He is born of water because it is the womb of the church, or the element out of which he comes forth; and, he is born of the Spirit because He is the appointer of this, Christ's plan of man's entering into the Kingdom of God.

THE RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.—i Corinthians 3:16-17.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

That the Holy Spirit, as a comforter, dwells in the heart of the devoted child of God, no one who reads and believes the Bible will deny. But the question in which we are most concerned just here is not, "Does the Holy Spirit, in some way, dwell in the heart of every Christian?" but, rather, "How does He dwell in them?" Some Christian men and women claim that the Holy Spirit does not only dwell in them literally, but that He endows them with a certain amount of supernatural knowledge and power. Still there are others who claim that the Holy Spirit dwells in them only figuratively, or by His teaching through the written word—just like the spirit of George Washington dwells in those who are in possession of something he said or wrote while living. It seems that the untenable and unscriptural position assumed by the advocates of the former theory has stimulated those of the latter to swing to the opposite extreme, which is equally as

far from the Bible teaching on the subject. We think both of these theories are wrong. We believe the first mentioned one is incorrect because its advocates claim too much. From a preceding chapter of this work we have already learned that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were not to be general and perpetual, as is claimed by the adherents of this theory, but that they were to cease when the New Testament was reduced to writing. The advocates of the second mentioned theory are also wrong in their views on this subject. They seem to forget that the words in which a thought is conveyed, are not the thought itself, or that the truths suggested or taught by a person is not the person himself. Their theory is therefore wrong, because it teaches that all they receive are the truths taught by the Holy Spirit and not the Holy Spirit Himself; while the Bible teaches that God gives, not only the truths taught by the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit Himself to those who obey Him. (Acts 5:32.) Seeing that both of these theories are wrong, let us turn to the Bible and see what we can learn about the subject now in hand. To this end we shall try to produce Scriptural answers to the following questions:

1st, Do the New Testament Scriptures teach

that the Holy Spirit really and literally dwells in our hearts? 2d, How do we receive the Holy Spirit? 3d, Upon what conditions does God give us the Holy Spirit? 4th, What is the evidence of His presence in our hearts? 5th, What does the Holy Spirit do for us while dwelling in us?

1st, Do the New Testament Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit really and literally dwells in our hearts? We believe they do. But as this is a Bible question, we will let the New Testament answer it for us. During His personal ministry, Jesus said to His disciples, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."—Luke 11:13. Here our Saviour declares that God will give, not merely the teaching of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit Himself to those who ask Him. One may object here by saying that, "during the personal ministry of Christ and for the first seventy years after His death, God did give the Holy Spirit to certain individuals, but such is not the case now." It is well to remember just here that since the beginning of the Spiritual reign, God has given the Holy Spirit in different measures to different individuals, but we must be careful and not explain

away all of the Bible in special application, leaving nothing applicable to us at all. That it is God's purpose to give the Holy Spirit, as a comforter, to each one of His children throughout the Christian age, is evident, we think, from the following Scriptures: On the day of Pentecost, when the three thousand souls whose hearts were pricked by the truths they had heard, cried out saying, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—Acts 2:37-39. Here the Apostle told the three thousand that, if they would repent and be baptized unto the remission of their sins, they would receive the "gift of the Holy Spirit." Is this all he told them? No. He goes on and shows them that the gift of the Holy Spirit was promised to them, to their children, to those who were afar off, and to all whom the Lord should call. From this language we learn that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" was not to be special and limited, as some Bible readers claim, but that it was to be general and perpetuated throughout the Christian

age. That the "gift of the Holy Spirit" mentioned by Peter on Pentecost has reference to the Holy Spirit Himself and not to the salvation from sin offered by Him, is evident from Peter's words before the council in Jerusalem. He says, "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him."—Acts 5:32. From this verse of Scripture we learn that God gives the Holy Spirit Himself to those who obey Him. Paul says, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."—Rom., 8:11. This Scripture proves that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian's heart in a literal sense. But we are often told that this is figurative language, that it means that the Holy Spirit dwells in us only in the sense in which His teaching dwells in us. If this be true, the Apostle should have told the Roman brethren that, in the final judgment, God would collect up their sleeping dust and quicken it to immortality by the knowledge or teaching of the Holy Spirit that dwelt in them. According to this position, all of the pious unlearned will have to sleep on even after the judgment because there is no

knowledge or teaching of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, while all of the learned infidels who have a knowledge of the Holy Spirit's teaching will be quickened to an immortal life. The same writer says, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."—i Cor., 3:16. Again he says, "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."—Gal., 4:6. We could quote many other verses of Scripture which prove that the Holy Spirit, as a comforter, dwells in the Christian's heart, but these are sufficient. God has spoken, let us believe Him.

Somebody may say, "I can't understand how the Holy Spirit can dwell in the heart of every child of God, seeing they number up into the millions and are scattered all over the civilized world." That, no doubt is true, but is the fact that we can not comprehend the sacred relation which the Holy Spirit bears to our own Spirit, any reason why we should reject as untrue and absurd, the Bible doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's heart? Can we draw such a conclusion and be justified in making it a precedent for all subsequent actions having to do with both Spiritual and natural relations or truths which we can

not understand? Shall the farmer refuse to sow the seed because he does not understand how it grows? Shall we refuse to listen to the music of the graphophone because we cannot understand how it reproduces the human voice? Shall we refuse to be cheered by the songs of the birds because we can not understand how they can produce such sweet and harmonious music? Shall we close our eyes to the light of the sun and refuse to be fanned by the ocean breeze, because we can not understand all about nature and her laws? You say no. Is it any more reasonable, then, that we should deny the doctrine of the literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, because we can not understand how He can make His abode in human hearts? Certainly not. We can not tell how our own spirit dwells in our body. Yet it does. Though so diverse in nature, our body and spirit dwell together. How beautifully and sweetly are they blended into one being, acting and reacting upon each other, thus forming such a pleasing and mutual companionship. Yet, we do not understand how our spirit dwells in us or how the relationship between the body and spirit is formed. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Were it God's

will that we know just how the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian, the Bible would tell us, but since it nowhere says, the question, "How does the Holy Spirit dwell in the human heart?" must in this work, as well as in all others of human origin, remain unanswered. It is in that class of "secret things" which belong to the Lord our God.

2d, How do we receive the Holy Spirit?

We have already learned that Christians receive the Holy Spirit, and now we come to investigate the way in which, or more properly speaking, the means through which they receive Him. The Apostle says, "and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us."—Rom., 5:5. From this quotation we learn that the Holy Spirit is given to us. But how is He given? Is He given mediately, or immediately? Jesus told His disciples that God would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, (Luke 11:13) but He does not say whether He will give Him through some means, or without any means. Bread is a gift from God and Christ told His disciples to pray for it, but we learn from Gen., 3:19 that man should eat bread in the sweat of his face, and Paul told the Thessalonians that "if any will not work, neither

let him eat.''—ii Thes., 3:10 . God gives us bread, but it is through His well organized system of nature. If by refusing to till the soil, we ignore God's plan of feeding His people, we will starve physically. So it is in Spiritual things. God gives us salvation, but we must purify our souls by ''obeying the truth''—(i Peter 1:22). So it is with our receiving the Holy Spirit. God gives us the Holy Spirit as a comforter, but He has provided a system of means through which He conveys the Holy Spirit to us. Paul says, ''This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith.''—Gal., 3:2. From the expression, ''works of law,'' and ''hearing of faith,'' it is evident that the Apostle was contrasting the Law of Moses and its service, with the gospel of Christ and its service. Hence the word, ''hearing,'' must mean more than the mere reception of sound. It means the act of accepting and doing God's will. We might quote many passages where the word ''hear'' implies obedience, but we will give but one. ''And it shall be, that every soul that shall not harken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.''—Acts 3:23. By the word, ''faith,'' the Apostle undoubtedly meant to express more than

the mere act of giving credence to the truths revealed by the New Testament. It comprehends the whole gospel plan of salvation, or the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. To prove that our interpretation of this verse is in keeping with other parts of the New Testament, we will quote a few passages in which the word "faith" is used as a synonym for gospel. "Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? Of works? Nay: but by a law of faith."—Rom., 3:27. Again, "but they only heard say, he that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc."—Gal., 1:23. Once more, "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."—Gal., 3:23. Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott renders the passage in Galatians 3:2, as follows: "This only I desire to learn from you; Did you receive the Spirit on account of works of law, or on account of obedience?" Therefore, if our interpretation of Gal., 3:2, and the rendering of the same by the authority quoted, be correct, it follows that the Galatians received the Holy Spirit by obedience to the gospel. God has made no change in His law or manner of giving the Holy Spirit to His children since the day in which Paul wrote his

letter to the Galatians, therefore we too receive the Holy Spirit through obedience to the gospel.

3d, Upon what conditions does God give us the Holy Spirit?

If our heavenly Father gives us food, clothing, and salvation from sin, only upon the condition that we comply with the requirements stipulated in His laws governing such gifts, it is not reasonable to suppose that He will give us the Holy Spirit unless we comply with certain conditions, the nature of which He has plainly revealed to us through the written word. Let us then turn to the New Testatament and see upon what conditions God has promised to give us the Holy Spirit. Just before His crucifixion Jesus spoke to His disciples, saying, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world can not receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you."—John 14:15-17. When Peter and the other Apostles were brought before the council at Jerusalem they said, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be

a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him."—Acts 5:30-32. Again, Paul said to the Galatian brethren, "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father."—Gal., 4:6. From these Scriptures we learn the following things: (a) That Jesus promised to give His disciples the Holy Spirit providing they loved Him and kept His commandments; (b) that the world (people who are not Christians) can not receive Him; (c) that God gives the Holy Spirit to "them that obey him;" and (d) that because we are sons (not before we are, or to make us sons) God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, "crying, Abba Father." Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, neither will the Holy Spirit dwell in a heart that is inhabited with an unholy spirit. Therefore, in order to have the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts as a Comforter, we must be both free from sin and the servants or righteousness. How can we reach this state in mind and life? Let the Apostle tell us. He says, "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were the servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form

of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.''—Rom., 6:17-18. Hence it follows that God gives us the Holy Spirit only on the condition that we purify our souls by obeying the truth. (i Peter 1:22.) Let us not stop with obedience to the first principles of the gospel, but rather take heed to all things spoken by Christ and His Apostles ''and continue in them,'' for otherwise, as it was in Saul's case, the Holy Spirit will depart from us. (i Sam., 16:14.)

4th, What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in our hearts?

The fruit test is the only test. Paul says, ''the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk. Let us not become vain glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.''—Gal., 5:22-26. Without the tree, there can be no fruit. The Christ-like life manifested in our lives is the only evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in our hearts. When, after we have obeyed the gospel and show, not only in pretense,

but in actual words and deeds, that we both live and walk in the Spirit, we are bearing the "fruit of the Spirit" which is the only evidence that He dwells in our hearts. Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets, who will come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them." —Matt., 7:15:20. This thought may be more clearly brought out by the following illustration: Two boys who were twin brothers were left orphans at the age of two years. Immediately following the death of their parents, one of the boys was adopted by Mr. J.. who was a very wicked and profane man, and the other one was adopted by Mr. G., a splendid Christian gentleman. While very diverse in their manner of living, these men were friends and lived in the same city. Mr. C., a man who had been acquainted with both Mr. J. and Mr. G. for a number of years, and who knew the general makeup of

both men, moved from the city about the time these foster parents adopted the boys. Twenty years later he concluded to visit with his friends back in his old home city. Upon his arrival he learned that the foster parents were both dead and knew, of course, that the boys, if still living, had grown to manhood. While walking down a certain street with an old time friend Mr. C. saw a young man reeling under the influence of strong drink and rending the air about him with his vile and profane language. He watched the unfortunate young man for a minute and then turned to his friend and said, "Mr. J. is dead, but he certainly lives in this young man. This young fellow walks, reels, and swears just like Mr. J. used to do." His friend then informed Mr. C. that this young man was the boy who was adopted and reared by Mr. J. Whereupon Mr. C. said, "Judging from the kind of a life he is leading, he has the very spirit of Mr. J. dwelling in him." Soon after this he met the other young man and, after noticing that his language was chaste, his countenance bright and sweet, and his life pure and clean, he went to him and said, "You were very small when I saw you twenty years ago and I would not have recognized you were it not for the fact that your conversation, actions, and

general disposition are so much like those of my old friend, Mr. G., your foster parent." Each one of these young men showed by his actions or the fruit that he bore, that he had associated and walked so closely with the man who reared him that his life was not only controlled by, but that in a sense, the spirit of his foster parent dwelled in him. So it is with regard to the Holy Spirit's presence in us. When we, by reason of our close association and walk with Christ, make our lives like His, and when, from our words and actions, others can see that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him, we are bearing the "fruit of the Spirit," which is, to ourselves and others, the only evidence of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in our hearts.

5th, What does the Holy Spirit do for us while dwelling in us?

Before we notice the things that He does do, we think it necessary that we call attention to two things which He does not do, although it is claimed by some people that He does them. 1st, The Holy Spirit does not immune us from sickness or trouble in this life. While it is true that a great deal of the sickness and trouble which we have here could be avoided if we would observe more closely the laws of health, which the

Bible teaches us to do, yet the flesh is heir to such maladies and it is not the purpose of the Christian life to shield us from them. One of the most Spiritual characters whom it has ever been our pleasure to know, was a rheumatic victim; and, while she suffered almost constantly, she read her Bible daily, prayed without ceasing, and was never happier than when she could speak a word of cheer and commend to the Saviour of men all of those who came to her bedside. In the words of Paul, she believed that, "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grevious; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness." 2d, the Holy Spirit, although He dwells in our hearts, imparts to us no new information. We know nothing about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the life to come, except that which the Bible teaches us. Like Timothy, we must "give attendance to reading," and study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

What, then, does the Holy Spirit do for us while dwelling in us? By referring to the New Testament, we learn that He does the following things: (a) He seals us. "In whom ye also, hav-

ing heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."—Eph., 1:13. Again, Paul said to the same people, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption."—Eph., 4:30. (b) He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. "And hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us."—Rom. 5:5. (c) The Holy Spirit helps our infirmity by making intercession for us. "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered."—Rom. 8:26. (d) The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts crying Abba, Father. "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."—Gal. 4:6. (e) He will quicken our mortal bodies. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."—Rom., 8:11.

As to how the Holy Spirit seals us, sheds the

love of God abroad in our hearts, makes intercession for us, comes into our hearts "crying, Abba, Father," and will quicken our mortal bodies, the Bible, so far as we have been able to learn, does not tell us. Therefore, we confess ourselves incapable to answer and leave these Scriptures without comment.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.—Romans 8:16.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Our eternal happiness depends upon our being children of God. Our present happiness depends upon our knowledge of such. We believe that God, out of the abundance of His goodness, has not only provided means by which we can be released from the prison house of sin, but that He has furnished us the evidence by which we may know of a certainty that "we have passed out of death into life." But, notwithstanding that the Bible is as clear as the noon day's sun upon the question of pardon and its evidence, yet there is a great deal of confusion and doubt in the minds of some people relative to this subject. As a result of false teaching, some honest men and women believe that their feeling is the only evidence of their pardon from sin and their

acceptance with God. Therefore at times, especially during a protracted meeting when their emotional nature is worked up by the prayers, sermons, and songs, they feel unusually good and fancy themselves, as they express it, "on the mountain top of joy and hope," but after the meeting is ended, the excitement all over, and their emotions settle down to their normal condition, the contrast in their feeling is so great that they are down in the valley of doubt and despair, and we hear them singing,

"Dear Lord, if indeed I am thine,
If Thou art my sun and my song,
Say, why do I languish and pine,
And why are my winters so long?
Oh, drive these dark clouds from my sky;
Thy soul-cheering presence restore;
Lord, take me to Thee upon high,
Where winter and clouds are no more."

How inexpressible must be the misery and distress of men and women who can sing these lines with the spirit and understanding! Those who take their feeling as their only evidence of pardon, don't seem to understand that their sensation is the result of their teaching, and that a lie believed will produce the same effect as the truth. Jacob was told that Joseph, his favorite son, had been torn to pieces by a wild animal. It was a lie, Joseph was not dead, but it had the same effect upon his aged father as if it had been the truth. Jacob's feelings deceived him, therefore let us be careful that our feelings do not deceive us. Pardon is a moral proposition and must be established by moral evidence. It does not take place in our hearts, but in the mind of God. Therefore, we can not feel our pardon for the reason that we can not feel that which takes place in God's mind. We can know that we are pardoned and feel good as a result of such knowledge, but we can not feel our pardon and make our knowledge of such the result of our feeling. God's word is so plain upon the subject of pardon and its evidence, that there is absolutely no reason why any man should be in doubt as to whether or not he is a child of God. Where do we read of Peter or Paul, James or John expressing

any doubt as to their relation with God? Nowhere. There is not to be found one note of uncertainty or doubt in all of their writings; but, on the other hand, they were always confident that they were children of God. The Apostle says to his Corinthian brethren. "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."—2 Cor., 5:1.8. The same writer says to the Romans, "being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness."—Rom., 6:18. Again,

he says to the Thessalonians, "knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election."—1 Thes., 1:4. John says, "Beloved, now we are children of God."—1 John, 3:2. Job, who lived back in the dim twilight age of the world, says, "But as for me, I know that my redeemer liveth, and at last he will stand up upon the earth: And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see God."—Job, 19:25-26. No doubt expressed here. These men knew no "valley of doubt and despair," but they knew of a surety that they had "passed out of death into life." If they knew it, why not us know it? We can have the same evidence of our pardon that they had of theirs. The secret of their confidence and of our confidence is to be found in the passage, "The spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God."—Rom., 8:16.

In the Scripture just quoted, the Apostle emphatically declares that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. We ask then, How does the Spirit do this? Before we launch out into the main discussion of this subject, we want to call the reader's attention to the fact that the Apostle says that the Spirit bears witness "with our spirit," and not, as is

often quoted, "to our spirit." When we say that we bear witness "with our brother," we mean that our brother and ourself both testify to the same fact, but when we bear witness "to our brother," we alone do the testifying. The Scripture now under discussion says, "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God," thus showing that the Holy Spirit and our spirit must agree and both testify to the same fact—that "we are children of God." What, then, did the Apostle mean by saying that the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit? This is a question of fact and, like all others of like nature, must be determined by competent evidence, which can be adduced only from the Bible answers from the following questions: 1st, How does the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit? 2d, What must be the moral condition of our lives before the Holy Spirit and our spirit can agree and both testify to the fact that we are God's children? 3d, How does our spirit bear witness with the Holy Spirit?

1st, How does the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit?

The point to be decided is, "are we children of God?" The question as to whether or not we have been adopted into the family of God can be settled

only by two witnesses—the Holy Spirit and our spirit. They must agree and both testify to the fact that, to their personal knowledge, they know we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son. How, then, does the Holy Spirit testify, or bear witness to the fact that we are saved from sin? In this, as well as in our conversion, the Holy Spirit speaks through medium. The New Testament is the means through which He puts forth His testimony. We have none of the Holy Spirit's testimony by the inspiration of our own minds, neither have we the living voices of inspired men to inform us, but we have what is equal to this in point of value and infallibility, the New Testament, which is the written dispositions of the Holy Spirit. Through it, He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, or, if not children, He searches our hearts, lays bare before our eyes the very secrets of our lives, and shows us what manner of men we are. One man may ask just here, "Is it Scriptural to represent the statements of the New Testament as being the testimony of the Holy Spirit?" We think so. The Apostles heard Jesus speak the things concerning His prospective Kingdom, but they could not remember all He told them.

Therefore, God, after the ascension of His Son, sent them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth and to bring to their minds the things which Jesus had told them. The Apostles were not only dependent upon the Holy Spirit for knowledge of Spiritual things, but the very words they uttered were the words of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to them, "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit." —Mark, 13:11. Again, Luke, in describing the scenes on Pentecost when the promised Monitor came, says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."—Acts 2:4. The truths the Apostles learned by the Holy Spirit speaking directly to them, they spoke to the world. Paul says, "Unto us God revealed them through the Spirit," "which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth." The precious truths which the Apostles learned from the Holy Spirit were written down by the unerring hand of Inspiration, true copies of which have been handed down through the generations preceding us, and today, while we can not hear the living voices of inspired men, we have, in a written form, the words which "the Spirit teacheth." These words make up the whole

of the New Testament and constitute the medium through which the Holy Spirit puts forth His testimony.

2d, What must be the moral condition of our lives before the Holy Spirit and our spirit can agree and both testify to the fact that we are children of God?

The whole matter of the Holy Spirit's testimony resolves itself into this, the Holy Spirit, through the New Testament, teaches that men who pass through certain changes in mind and life, and, ever afterward, maintain a Christ-like character, are children of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit, through His medium, tells us just what we must do and be, before He will, with our spirit, testify to the fact that we are children of God. Some human judges can be influenced, juries bribed, and witnesses bought, but that will not be true in the great court in which we must all be tried before we can enter in through the gates into the city. There we will be brought before a Judge that is infallible, a Jury that acts upon nothing but law and evidence, an Attorney who, while touched by our infirmities, hates sin and unrighteousness, and a Witness who is familiar with the condition of our lives, and, while testifying, knows no variableness

or shadow of turning. But the Holy Spirit has not only subpoenaed us to appear before this great court when it shall convene on that day when God shall judge the secrets of men, but, through the New Testament, He has stipulated certain conditions and says that, if we will comply with them, He will testify to the fact that we are children of God. Blessed promise. The conditions that He imposes upon us are not hard. He says the yoke is easy and the burden is light. Jesus did all and more for our salvation than He asks us to do. The Holy Spirit tells us through the New Testament Scriptures that, if we will do the following things, He will bear witness with our spirit that we are God's children: 1st, He says, We must believe all the Bible teaches. 2d, We must repent sincerely of all of our sins. 3d, We must confess Christ as our Saviour before men. 4th, We must be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 5th, We must, ever after this, lead a faithful, consecrated life. When we do all of these things sincerely and from the heart, the Holy Spirit has promised to testify to the fact that we are God's children, and our heavenly Father has promised to give us an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3d, How does our spirit bear witness with the Holy Spirit that we are children of God? Or, in other words, How can our spirit testify to the fact that we have passed out of death into life?

The idea that our spirit can and does testify to the moral condition of our own lives and the relation which we bear to God, may seem strange and even absurd to some people, yet it is true. Speaking of the Gentiles, Paul says, "In that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them."—Rom., 2:15. Again, the same writer says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart."—Rom., 9:1-2. Here are two witnesses, Paul, in the aggregate, testifying to the brethren and his own spirit or conscience answering to the same thing in him. Man is a dual being, consisting of flesh and spirit. Paul denominates them as the outer and inner man. In life, they are blended into one harmonious nature or being, but they are separated in death. Then the flesh goes back to the earth from which it came and the spirit goes to God who gave it. The con

science or spirit passes upon the desires of the human heart and deeds of the body, as Paul says of the Gentiles, either "accusing or else excusing them." The nature of this judgment, however, depends upon the previous training or teaching of the conscience. To illustrate, the conscience of an individual who has been taught from childhood that it is wrong to defile the body by the use of profane language and strong drink, can not agree with the conscience of an indivual who thinks it no harm to swear and get drunk. Our conscience or spirit, if taught by the Holy Spirit that we, in order to be children of God, must believe all that God says and obey all that He commands, can testify to the fact as to whether or not we have believed and obeyed; and, if having done so, can bear witness with the Holy Spirit that we are children of God. John says, "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."—1 John, 2:3-4. We have already learned that the New Testament is the medium through which the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit. Through it He says to us, "You must believe all the Bible teaches." Our spirit knows whether or not we believe and so does

the Holy Spirit. There is no use for us to tell Him that we have done a thing when we have not. There is no use to lie to Him. Ananias and Sapphira tried that and, as a result of their telling the Holy Spirit a falsehood, were stricken dead. The Holy Spirit says, "You must repent of all your sins." Our spirit knows whether or not we have repented. If we have turned from and, as far as possible, made right the wrongs of our lives, our spirit knows it and can honestly and truthfully say, "We have repented." The Holy Spirit says, "You must confess Christ as your Saviour before men." If we have, from the very depths of our hearts, publicly acknowledged Jesus as our personal Saviour, our spirit knows it and can truthfully and conscientiously certify to the fact that "We have confessed Christ as our Saviour before men." The Holy Spirit says, "You must be baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." If we, in humble obedience, have gone down and been buried with Christ in the waters of baptism and come forth therefrom in the likeness of His own resurrection, our spirit knows it and can declare that "We have been baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Again, the Holy Spirit says, "Having obeyed the first principles of the gospel whereby

you have made yourselves free from sin (Rom., 6:17), give all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love."—2 Peter, 5:7. Our spirit says, "All these things we have earnestly and faithfully done." Then the Holy Spirit says, "You are the children of God," and "hereby you know that you know him if you keep his commandments."

THE END.

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